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THE ORIGINAL CUSTOM BIKE MAGAZINE

BACK STREET HEROES

JUNE 2023
ISSUE #470

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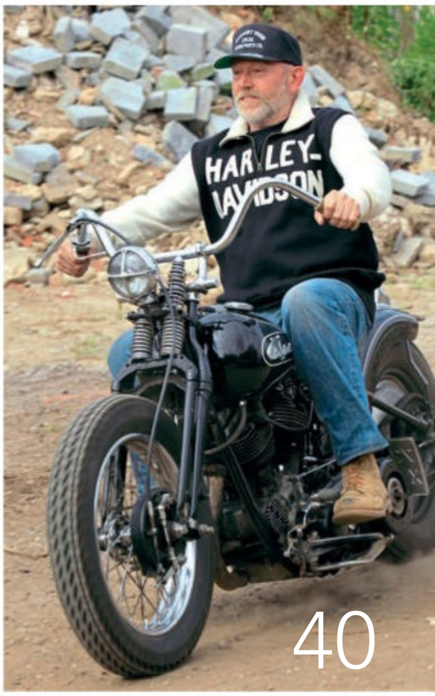

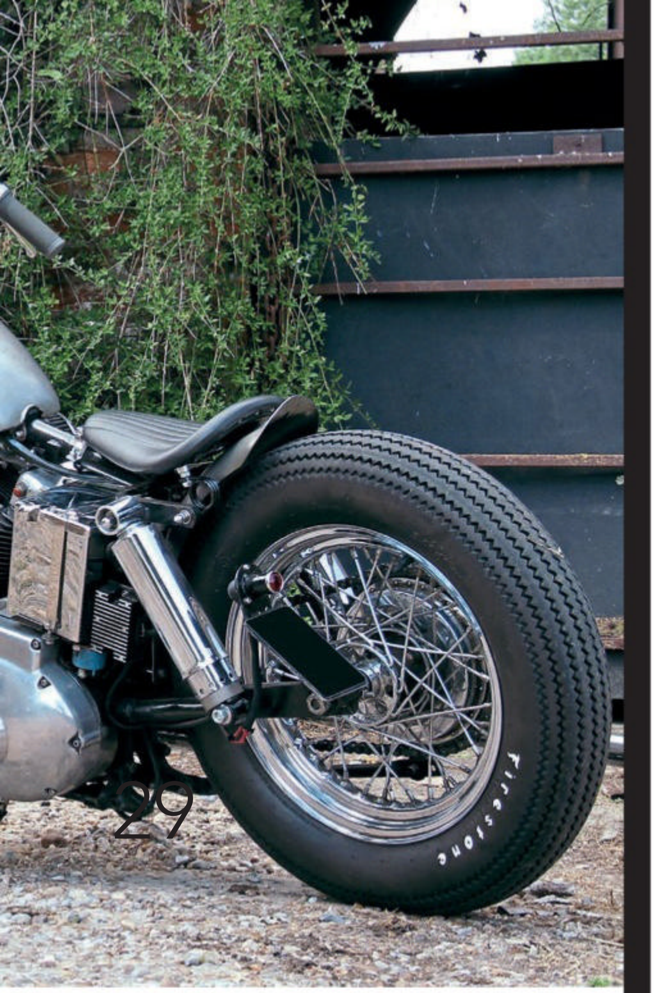

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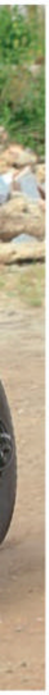

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EDITORIAL

Hello, and welcome to this new issue of BSH!

This issue is, to me anyway, a kind o' special one as it comes out at the beginning of May 2023 (on sale date is Thursday, 4th), and that means that I'll've had a motorcycle licence for 40 years (as of the 7th anyway).

Now, I know that, compared with some out there, that's nothing special to people who've been riding since the '60s and '70s, but it's kind o' a big deal to me, y'know? It's not 40 years of a full licence 'cos I didn't actually take me test until April '87, but it's 40 all told, provisional and full, and I'm kind o' proud o' that.

I was intending to try and make the 40 with just a motorcycle licence, and was 37 or so in when I bought a (very) old Harley that proved to be, as detailed elsewhere, an unreliable little sod at the outset, and that made me have to get a van, so I didn't make it to my goal, but it's an achievement anyway I feel, especially seeing as I, honestly, never thought I'd make it to 30 (years old, not with a bike licence) due to an excessively weighty right hand and a particular fondness for (mostly legal) mind-altering intoxicants, it seems particularly significant sitting here some 26 years later.

And, yes, I know that in me heart-of-hearts, in the grand overall scheme of things, strictly speaking it's actually only 38 years and, I think, six months when you take into account all the times His (or Her as it was at the time) Majesty's legal services had decided my licence needed a number of varying term 'holidays' at a particularly well-known postcode on the south coast of Wales, but what's a few speeding and top-up bans between friends, eh?

(pic by Loon)

……

Riding, and driving, around this sceptred isle, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the appalling state of our roads is, perhaps, something covertly sanctioned by our beloved (ahem) government in an attempt to slow down the speeds of traffic (and, as conspiracy theories go, it's a lot more believable than pizza-based Satanic paedophile rings or that leaders of the western world are, in fact, shape-changing lizards from another dimension, isn't it? I mean, really? Have you looked at the appearance of our King, or Donald Trump for that matter? What self-respecting alien shape-shifter's going to willingly have ears, or an orange complexion, like that?). Many years ago my Dad used to listen to The Goon Show on the radio, and one of my favourite things I heard was the announcer talking about a 'government dig up the road scheme for congesting traffic', which I always thought was a joke, but these days I'm not quite so sure.

What's that? Sorry? Yes, the wind has been quite strong of late now that you mention it and, yes, I think it may've blown me tin-foil hat off once or twice. Why do you ask?

……

If you've not been on the BSH website at www.backstreetheroes.com for a while, or seen much of our social media presence on Facebook or Instagram, then you may not know about the really quite amazing online competition we're running in conjunction with the chaps at Gasoline Ally Speedshop?

We've teamed up with them to give you a chance to win one of their Gas Bomber hardtail frames to take Hinckley Triumph 790cc and 865cc oil-cooled twin engines (Bonneville, Thruxton, and America models). It's a high-spec, coded MIG-welded hardtail made from inch-and-a-quarter and inch-and-a-half 12swg steel tube, with 32-degrees of rake, and 15mm thick laser-cut axle mounts with 20mm axle slots, and comes with engine mounts welded in position for the above engines; a full engine mount kit with spacers; headstock bearing cups; and rear wheel adjusters; and would set you back 950 English pounds if you were to purchase one but, as I said, we have one to give away. Aren't we good to you?

To be in with a chance of winning it is simplicity itself. Go to the BSH website at www.backstreetheroes.com click the WIN link, and follow the destructions… instructions, sorry. Told you it was simple, didn't I?

Good luck!

Right, that's me off for a brew, see you next month!

NIK

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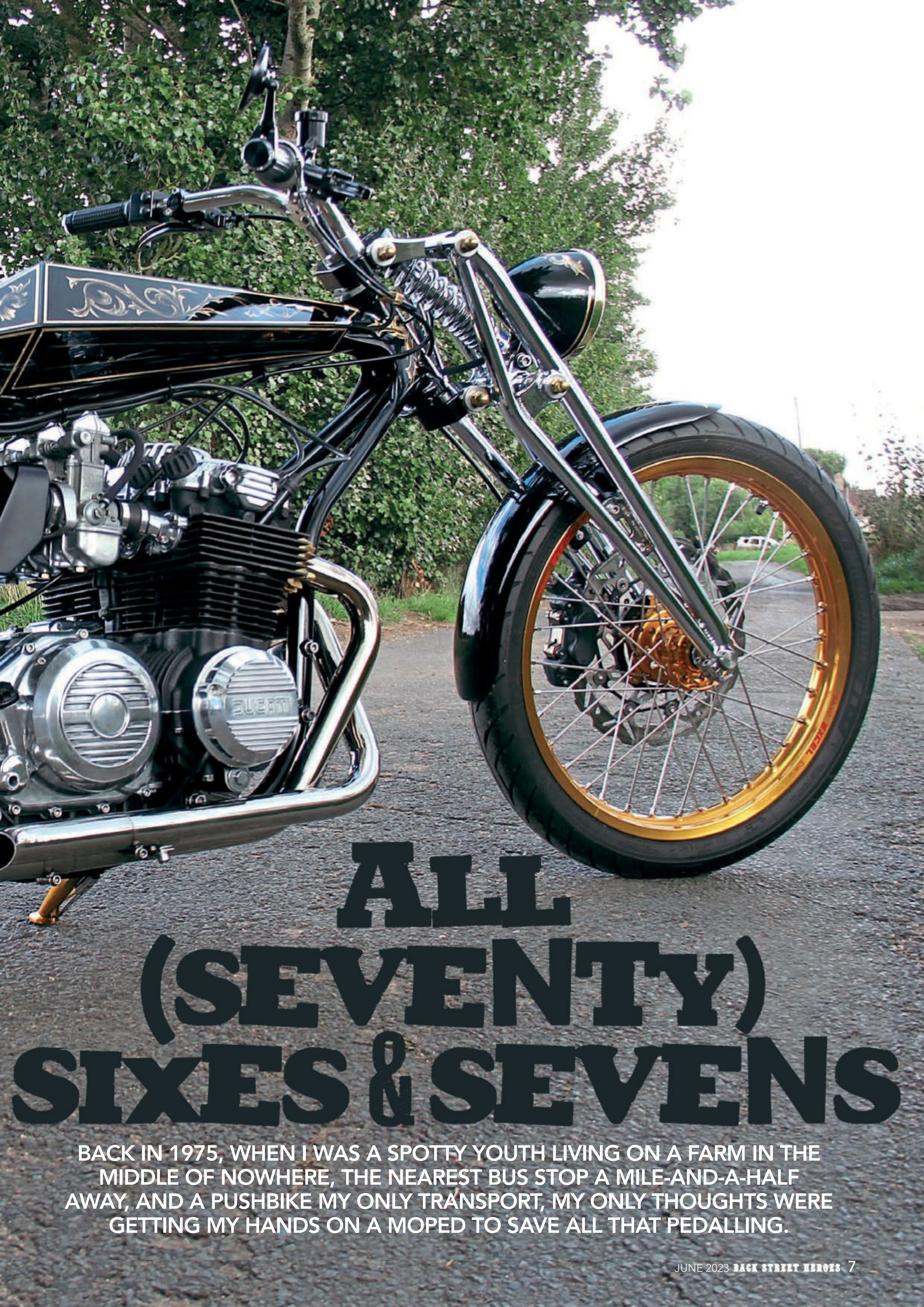
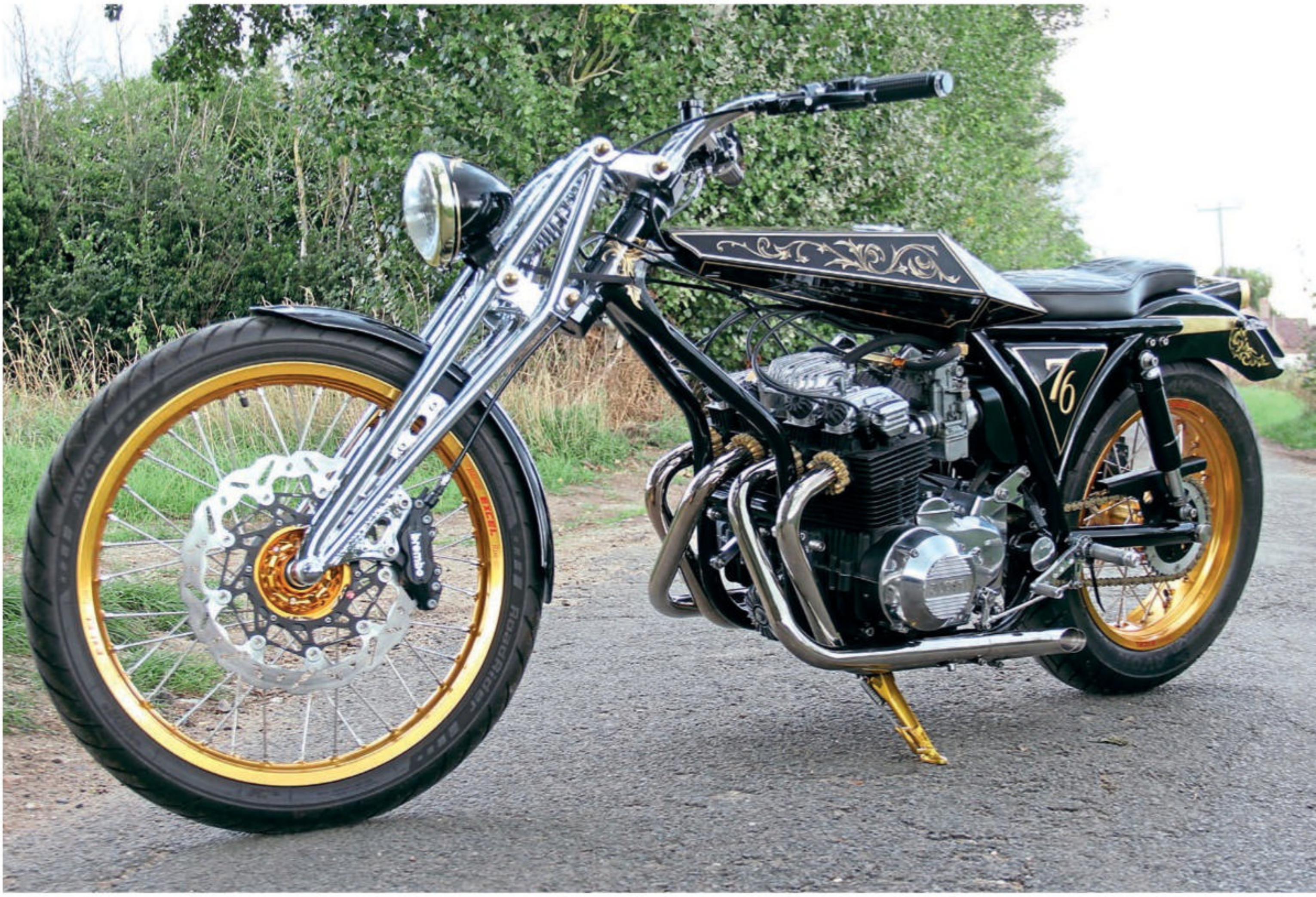


ALL (SEVENTY) SIXES & SEVENS

BACK IN 1975, WHEN I WAS A SPOTTY YOUTH LIVING ON A FARM IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, THE NEAREST BUS STOP A MILE-AND-A-HALF AWAY, AND A PUSHBIKE MY ONLY TRANSPORT, MY ONLY THOUGHTS WERE GETTING MY HANDS ON A MOPED TO SAVE ALL THAT PEDALLING.

76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AVON

ON a rare trip to the bright lights of a big city (well, Cambridge), in a backstreet newsagent, I spotted a copy of an American magazine 'Street Chopper'; my pocket money just about stretched to it and, having had a look through, my digger dream was born.

Step forward 44 years and, finally, I was ready to make that dream a reality. I had the remains of a 1976 Ducati GT860 in the shed and, while helping Selwyn, of Selwyn Motorcycles, Haverhill, relocate his workshop, I'd spotted a Benelli Quattro 500 four-cylinder engine needing a home. A lot of '70s diggers ran 750/4 Honda engines, as well as Z900 Kwaks, so the four-pot Benelli'd look right at home and, importantly, wouldn't be just another Honda. I'd also spoken to Malcolm Shepherdson, from Metal Malarkey Engineering in Shropshire, at a show about a set of their girder forks so things started to slot into place. They'd make the frame, the forks and the tank, etc., and the idea was to use up-to-date technology and parts, but not compromise either rideability (which, it has to be said, diggers weren't famed for) or the style of the '70s – a tall order, I know, but after discussing the project further with him, the bits I'd collected were hauled over to Bishops Castle for work to start.

To keep everyone on the same page, MME use a project management system and Solidworks 3D rendering, and with the late Jack Farrington there having produced drawings/images of the frame, forks, exhausts, etc., the bike was visually planned before any work started, and it also meant that I could be kept up-to-date with everything that was going on.

The frame, in CDS round tube, was jigged up and TIG-welded by Malcolm, and incorporates Ducati eccentric chain adjusters in the swingarm pivot, mated to a shortened Ducati swingarm. K-Tech Suspension springless rear shocks, and a set of Metal Malarkey girder forks, made in-house by Reuben Shepherdson, were designed to give the required trail with the 36-degree rake frame, and the wheels were built up using Talon hubs, Takasago Excel rims, and stainless spokes (21-inch front, 17-inch rear), and shod with Avon tyres.

The design stage also incorporated mounting the Brembo brakes, four-pot front, twin-pot rear, and the engine mounts to ensure the chain run lined up without touching anything. Step forward Phil James, ace fabricator, with a long list of handmade bits amongst which included the alloy rear struts to help hold up the much-modified Sportster rear 'guard off the tyre; the alloy petrol tank; the alloy side-panels (that pop off with hidden mounts); and an alloy air-box, with K&N filter, that takes the weight of the four Dell'Orto carbs rather than have them hanging from the inlet rubbers like most do. A Pingel fuel tap and aircraft-style filler n' cap completed the petrol tank, and Phil also made up the brass fuel rail for the carbs, doing away with the need for a load of flexi-hoses and joints. The battery box, with horn, reg/rec (that's regulator/rectifier to those not in the know), starter solenoid, coils, digital ignition unit, and Motogadget M-unit, and rear master-cylinder were all located behind the side-panels and under the seat. Talking of the seat, the alloy base made up by MME was shipped off to Saddle Craft Seating in South Shields to be covered in leather, and incorporates a gel pad for increased comfort. They made a perfect job of it – the stitching is spot-on.

The girder front end, with its adjustable shock, was finished off with a Softail Deuce front mudguard (again, the mounts were planned before the forks were built), and a set of suitably narrow, but not too narrow, stainless handlebars were made, and fitted with Brembo levers and a Brembo radial master-cylinder, and Motogadget grips, buttons, 'bar-end indicators, and mirror. They also nicely incorporate a Motoscope digital speedo.

With the 'bars done, the final part of the ergonomics was the foot-rests – Barleycorn Engineering (in Diss, not too far from me) rear-sets bolt to the mounts designed in at the planning stage, and look, and feel, great, although some lateral thinking was needed to get the rear brake linkage to the master-cylinder behind the side panel. The final riding position's very similar to a modern naked production bike, even though at first sight it may look radical – my body doesn't do radical these days!

The exhausts had, just had to be classic crossover four-into-fours with turnouts; MME made them up in stainless steel, and hid the mounting brackets, and I finished off the removeable turnouts and installed some baffles. A modified Rl side-stand, with the mounts hidden under the engine, stops the bike falling over, and tucks up out of the way when on the move.

That just left the electrickery. Phil waved a magic wand and wired in the simple, yet effective, Motogadget M-unit; the mo-Lock keyless ignition; and the speedo (and fitted the sensor on the rear wheel); and the handlebar switches and indicators; lights; horn; and all the stuff to make the engine go and stop. It's clever stuff the Motogadget gear – who would've thought the engine start button doubles up as the kill-switch?

With the bike dry-built and in bare metal, I went to collect it and get it on the road for final sorting before paint. I dropped it in to see Selwyn, as he's THE man for classic Benellis, to get him to set up the engine before the MoT and road test, but 100 or so miles revealed a couple of smoky cylinders, a poorly gearbox, and the fact that it was under-geared. An engine rebuild was in order so, while the bike was stripped for painting, the motor went to him.

It turned into a major overhaul with a rebore; new pistons; new clutch and gearbox; new higher- gear primary drive; and a reconditioned head; along with all new bearings, seals and gaskets. I took the new engine covers, done by Philip Heard to wind up all the experts quick to proclaim that it's a Honda engine, and polished them, while the block got a coat of black, sorted.

Only one person was ever going to paint it. I was talking to Hilary Stokes at Hurricane Airbrush Art at the Copdock Show a few years ago, saw her work, and she understood exactly what I was after. It's black with a very fine 'flake, gold-leaf baroque leaf scrolls, and her interpretation of the imagery from Steve Earle's Copperhead Road on the rear tank panel, and it's perfect!

That just left putting it all back together, with a few bits of brass detailing – job's a good 'un, and it's only taken 48 years!

SPEC:
1977 Benelli Quattro 500 498cc engine (reconditioned head, rebored/new pistons, Metal Malarkey alloy airbox with K&N filter, rebuilt gearbox, changed primary ratios, Boyer Bransden Micro Digital ignition/coils, MME stainless 4-into-4 cross-over exhausts with baffles, custom engine covers), MME/1976 Ducati twin-loop CDS digger-style frame (36-degree rake, 108mm trail, 153mm ground clearance, l692mm wheelbase, 185kg dry weight, 30-inch seat height), Barleycorn Engineering rear-sets, Yamaha Rl side-stand (modified), Avon tyres (90/90/2l front & 150/70/l7 rear), Talon hubs, Takasago Excel rims, stainless spokes, aftermarket wavey discs (320mm semi-floating front, 220mm rear), Brembo calipers (4-pot front, 2-pot rear)/master-cylinders (radial front), MME chromed girders with Hagon shock, Pro Lite brake lines, HD Softail Deuce front mudguard (modified), MME stainless 'bars with Motoscope digital speedo/internal wiring, Motogadget buttons/grips/'bar-end mirror/front indicators, MME alloy tank (hidden mounts/Pingel tap/aircraft filler/side-panels, Saddle Craft leather seat with gel pad/custom stitching, H-D XL rear mudguard (modified) MME alloy struts, Ducati swingarm (modified), KTech springless rear shocks, MME alloy caliper mount, one-off loom, Motogadget M-unit/mo-Lock keyless ignition/rear indicators, Bates headlight, LED-converted Nitelite rear light, Stebel horn

FINISH:
Black paint with mini flake/gold leaf/pinstripes/baroque leaf scrolls/Copperhead Road mural by Hilary at Hurricane Airbrush Art (**01359 240980** or Facebook), polishing by owner

ENGINEERING:
Metal Malarkey Engineering (**01588 630288** or **www.malarkeyengineering.co.uk**), rear-sets by Barleycorn Engineering (**01379 586728** or **www.barleycorn.co.uk**)

THANKS TO:
"Malcolm Shepherdson, Phil James, Reuben Shepherdson & Jack Farrington RIP at Metal Malarkey Engineering; Selwyn at Selwyn Motorcycles, the Benelli guru (**01440 268120** or **www.selwynmotorcycles.co.uk**); Hilary at Hurricane Airbrush Art; Barleycorn Engineering; Phil Heard; K-Tech Suspension (**01283 559000** or **www.ktechsuspension.com**); Saddle Craft Seating (**0191 455 6262** or **www.saddlecraft.co.uk**); & Roz for putting up with my various two-wheeled indulgences…"

COLIN DARLOW
PICS BY **NIK**

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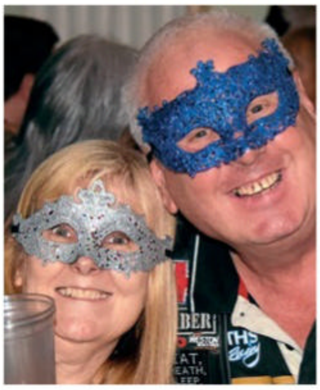
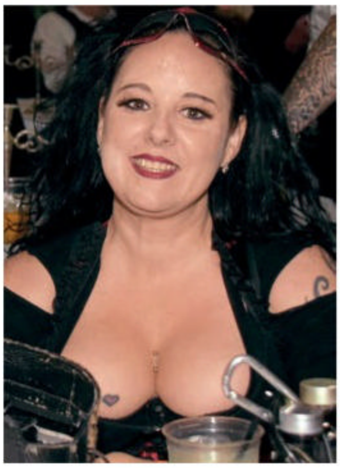
EVENT

KAOS AT THE CASTLE

WHEN THE NIGHTS DRAW IN, THE ROADS GET SALTED, AND THE CAMPING GEAR GETS PUT AWAY, WHAT DO BIKERS DO FOR ENTERTAINMENT?

JOKER 666
Dirty Old Bastards
Rally Club





FOUNDER
GRUMPY

IN October 2022 two hundred and twenty of us headed off to a brand-new rally experience, seamlessly transported into the Norbreck Castle Hotel on Queen's Promenade, Blackpool. It was a brave move to launch a new event from scratch so late in the year with just blind faith that it'd cover costs, but it worked, and it worked well. Check-in was available from Friday afternoon with very good hotel buffet breakfasts included in the ticket price, and reasonably-priced meals were available in the hotel restaurant for those not wishing to venture into town. There was secure indoor parking for bikes although, that late in the year, few took advantage of it on this occasion.

Once booked in at reception, event wristbands were collected from the elegant ballroom which had its own stage (and bar!) and was going to form the hub of the event. As well as beer and bands, the ballroom housed NABD and Armed Forces Bikers fundraising stalls, and City of Leather occupied a small side room for their stall; Nazus Embroidery did patches, sewing and repairs; and a stall of Crowmade horror-themed soft toys was set up for the Saturday. Friday night's entertainment began with music from the Bodget & Scarper rock disco, followed by two bands: The Deal and BoomShanka, with Mistress Vicky hosting air guitar and tattoo competitions in between bands. Bodget & Scarper then kept the night alive until the bar closed at 2am.

Saturday (after the inclusive buffet breakfast) the ballroom was open to collect Scavenger Hunt sheets – twenty items, with the proviso that 'clever/funny substitutes are allowed and may get bonus points! The hotel's ideally placed for this as there's a tram stop right outside which takes you along the seafront into Blackpool, and eighteen teams collected hunt sheets, but there was so much to see and do in Blackpool that only nine teams were back with a completed hunt by the 7pm deadline.

For those who didn't wish to venture into town, Bodget & Scarper provided music again from noon, and live acoustic music by Kate S began at 2.30pm. There'd been silly games planned for 4pm but, with so many taking advantage of the wonderful weather and going off-site, the games were deferred until the evening. Hosted once again by the inimitable and cuttingly funny Mistress Vicky, they comprised a cracker-eating competition, a Yard of Ale contest, and the Lama Lama game (in which blindfolded contestants had to find their partner by animal sounds (no touching allowed) – much funnier and more entertaining than it sounds. Someone did charity skipping round the dance floor to raise money for Cancer Research, and just for attempting to skip in an evening dress she earned every pound she raised!

The first of Saturday night's bands were punks Pompy's Heroes, then Mistress Vicky took up the reins once again for the scavenger hunt awards (voting by audience cheer), Club Turnout, Furthest Travelled (by bike), and the silly games prizegiving. The final trophy for Best Dressed Beau and Belle of the Ball went to Ann and Dave Winder who surprised everyone when they said their impressive outfits were not only their wedding attire, but also that the event was part of their honeymoon. The evening was polished off by the second band of the night, The Bite, who got everybody rockin', and the dance floor was filled once again.

The first Kaos was a resounding success and hosts Mistress Vicky, Scouse, and Fing (aka The 3 Pilox) are not only going to repeat the event on October 20-22, but they're also organising a summer Kaos as an addition to Tatcon in August, and're planning something entirely different at the same venue for February '24, too, so if you fancy a rally vibe event with proper beds and hot water, check out their Facebook page.

FD

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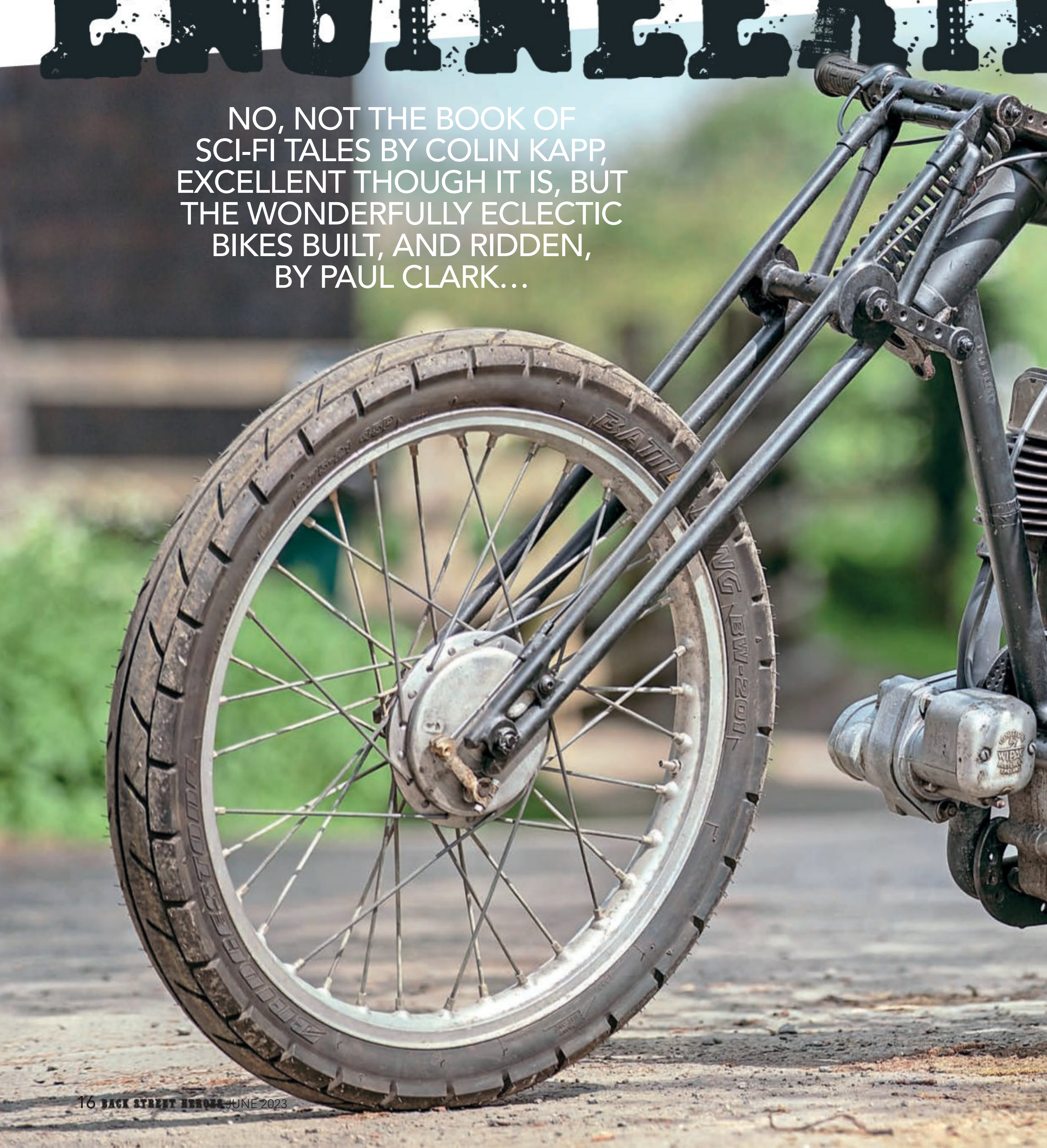
ENGINEERI

NO, NOT THE BOOK OF SCI-FI TALES BY COLIN KAPP, EXCELLENT THOUGH IT IS, BUT THE WONDERFULLY ECLECTIC BIKES BUILT, AND RIDDEN, BY PAUL CLARK…



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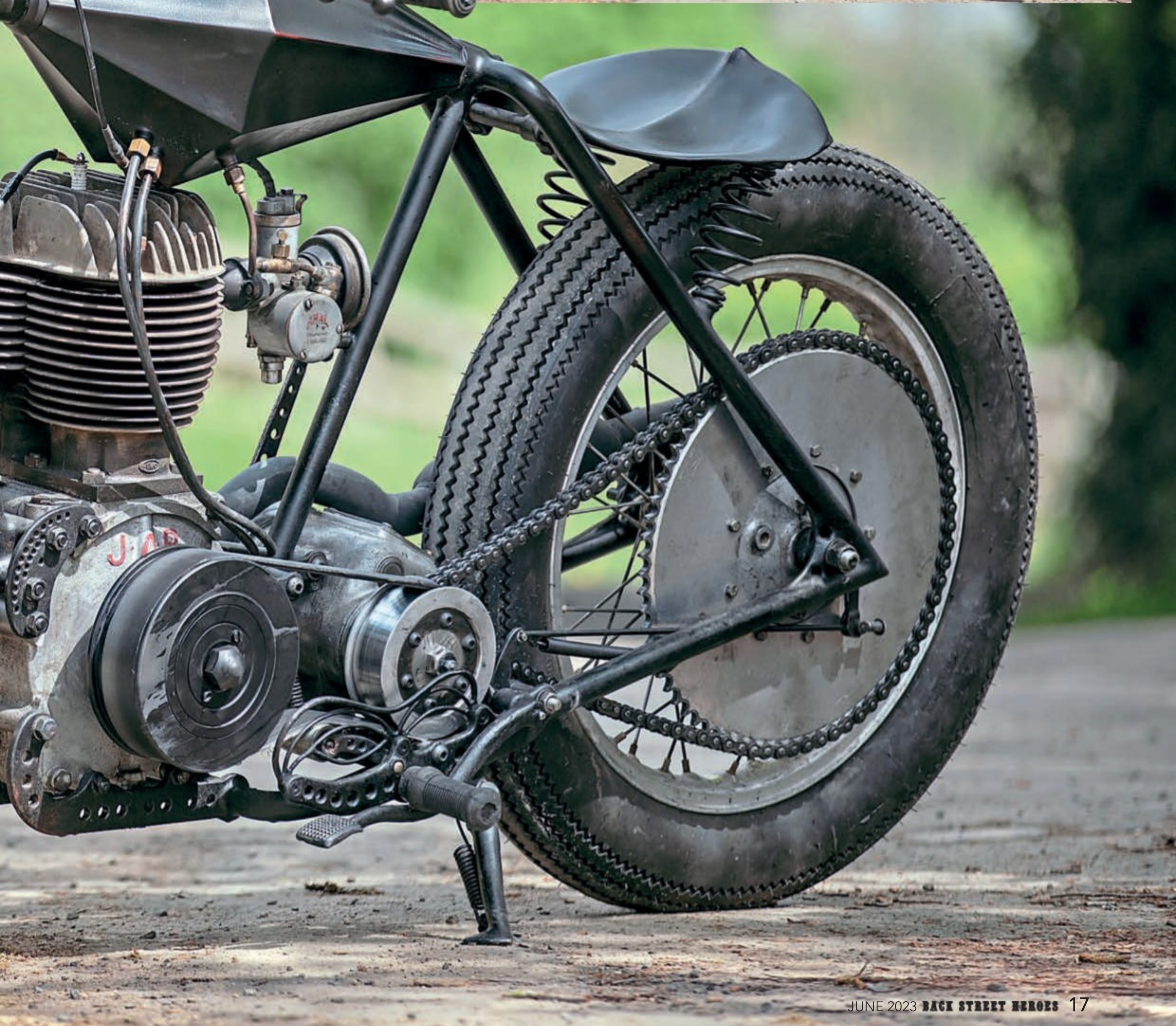
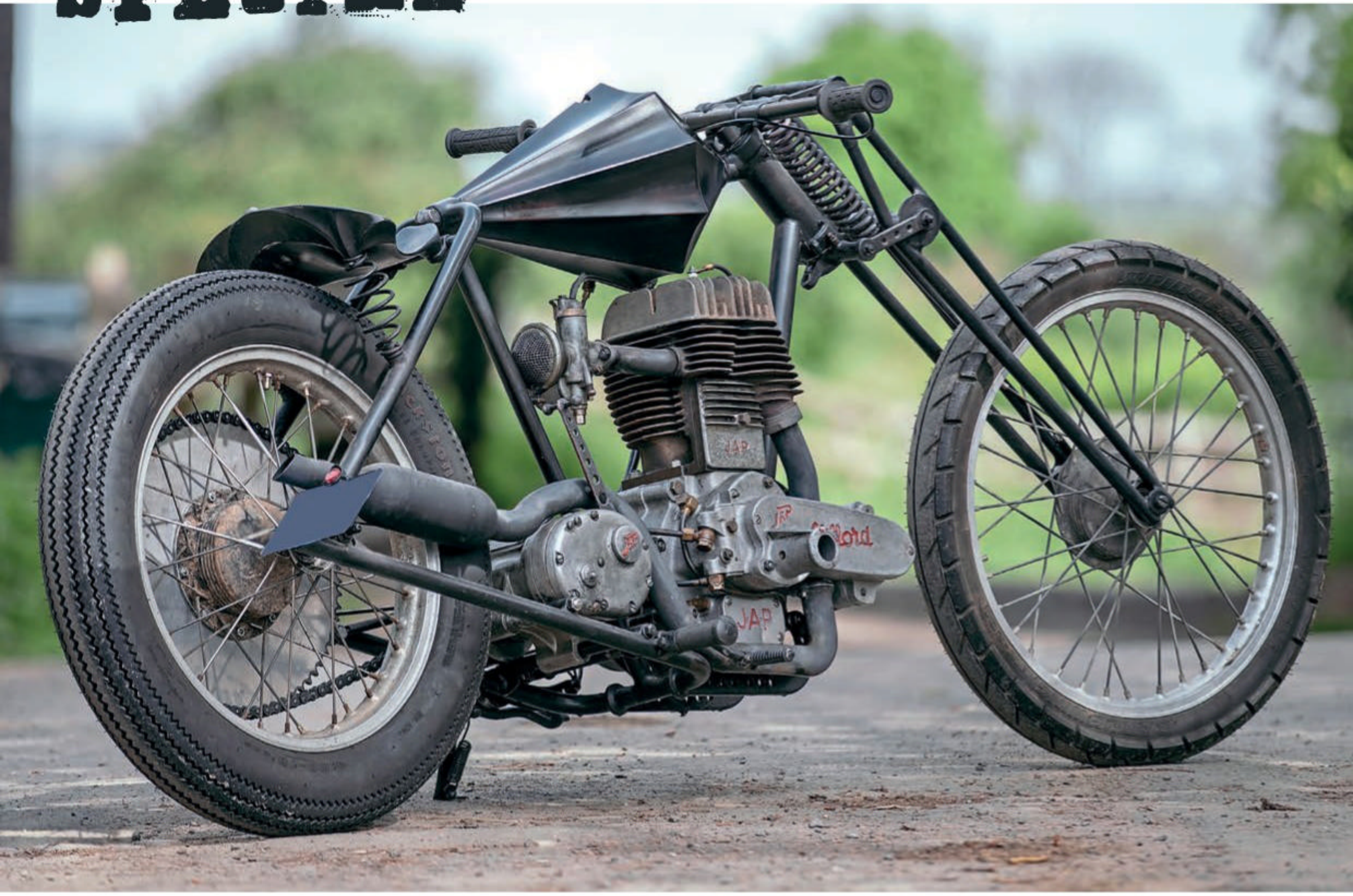


J.A.P ROTAVATOR SPECIAL

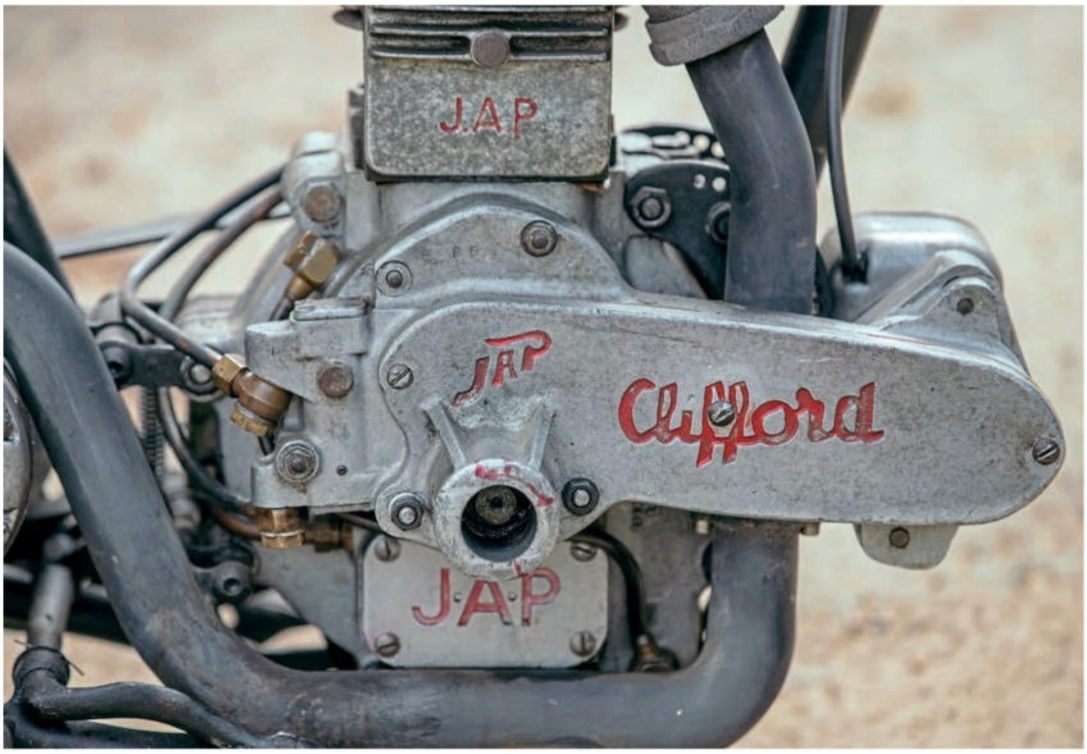


IGNITION
by
WIPAC
BLETCHLEY
ENGLAND

SPEC:
J.A.P 600cc side-valve rotavator engine (Amal Monobloc carb, wire mesh air-filter, Suco centrifugal clutch, aftermarket timing belt primary, modified BSA gearbox, Wipac magneto, one-off exhaust, brass oil lines), one-off frame/foot-rests/hangers/controls, Bultaco wheels/brakes, one-off BSA-style forks, BSA yokes, one-off 'bars, aftermarket mini speedo, one-off fuel tank/seat, one-off rear sprocket

FINISH:
Matt black paint by owner

ENGINEERING:
Owner



AMAL
ENGLAND

Many, many years ago, when doing work experience at the tender age of 15, I was gifted a 600cc J.A.P engine, and I promised myself that, one day, I'd put it to good use but, for those many years since, it's been sat, alongside other engines and bits and pieces, in the corner of my garage.

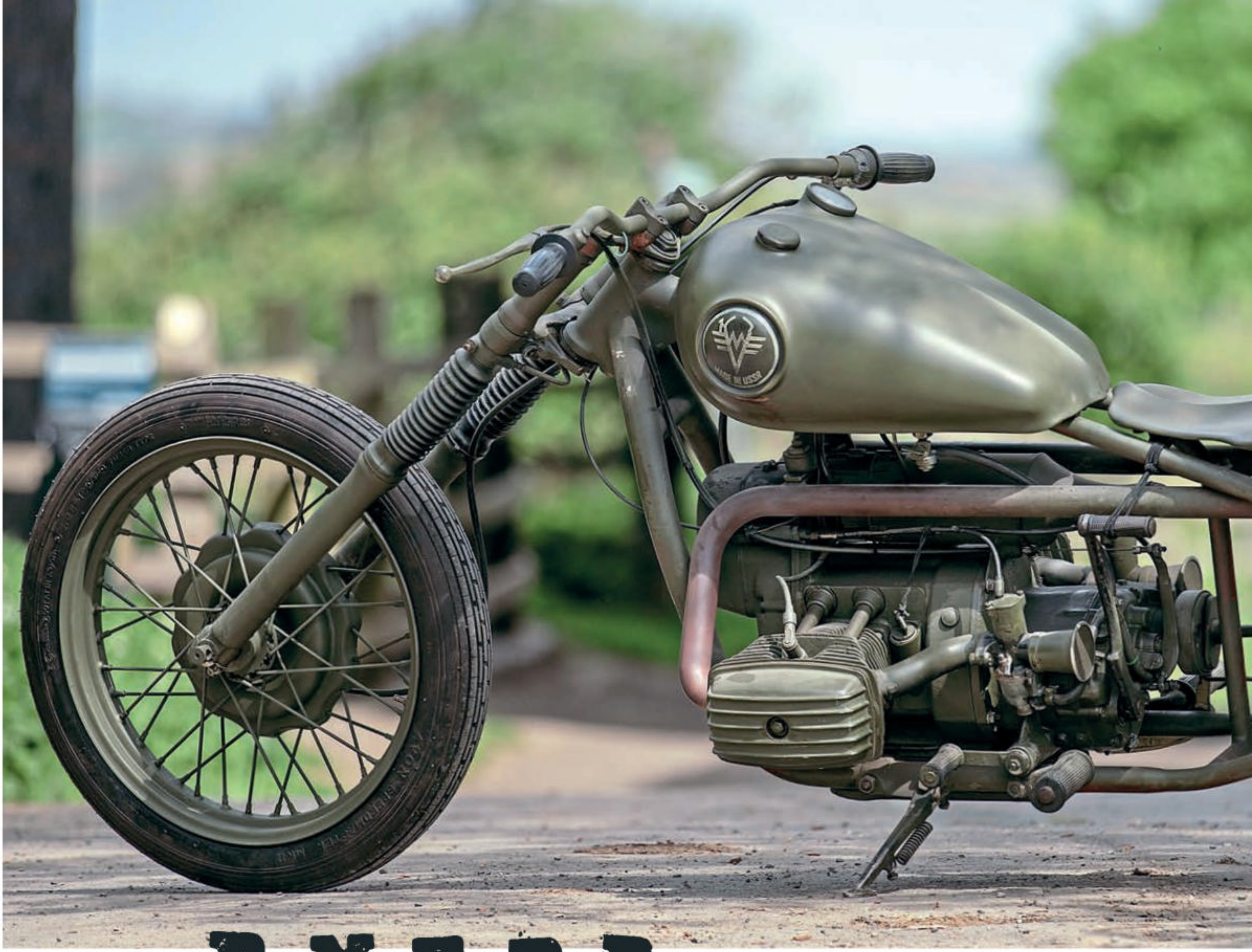
During one of my regular eBay searches, I saw for sale an old Clifford rotavator, complete with a rare and very attractive Clifford chain-case. Now, unless you're really into old rotavators, you probably won't have heard of Clifford, but they were a subsidiary of the more famous Australian-made Howard Cultivators (later Rotavators), and were run under the middle name of owner Arthur Clifford Howard. He started the original company back in 1912, and went on to sell rotavators and other garden machinery up until the current day. He started off using tractor engines but, after the Second World War, fitted various motorcycle engines, quite often small-capacity Villiers and BSA M21 591cc side-valves. I had no intention of ploughing any ground, but I thought it'd make a great addition to my bits and pieces, so bought it.

I've long had a dream of making a 360-degree symmetrical prism tank so set about making one. Then I had an idea to build a flat-tank type bike so, looking around my collection of bits, decided to finally use the J.A.P engine and mate it to the Clifford bottom end. After the engine was satisfactorily reassembled it sat on the workbench and, with the tank positioned above it, I started to see how the bike'd develop as the tall engine definitely gave the look I had in my head.

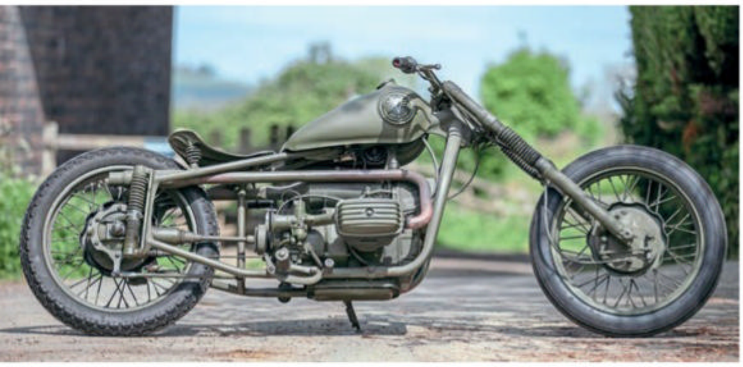
I tried various wheels I had in the workshop to see how they looked and, eventually, settled on a pair of aluminium Bultaco wheels (drum brake, of course), and with them all precariously suspended on bits of wire, started measuring up and sketching a frame to bring it all together. Once basic measurements were made, I started cutting and machining tube that'd become the frame and, once I was happy with the dry build, started welding it all together. For the forks I used a BSA steering stem, and made a set of BSA-style girders, and also thought it'd be quite amusing to have the bike with a leather belt-driven primary, and also a hand gear-change (sometimes called a suicide shift, very apt!). I did the calculations for the gear ratio and was satisfied I'd done it correctly, but it soon turned out I hadn't, hence the huge rear sprocket I ended up having to make to correct the error. Once done, it was quite a quirky look, I thought, so it stayed. Just to confuse further, the front brake's actually operated by what looks like the clutch lever – I did at first have a foot-clutch operating an idler on the drive belt, but I shredded two leather belts before I fitted a rubber one, and it was too scary – it was either on or off, and I once did a big wheelie at a bike night, narrowly missing a bunch of Harleys. Not everything goes to plan during a build, so compromise is often required - now it has a centrifugal clutch…

I really wanted it to have a comfy seat as riding it was going to be very challenging – one less thing to worry about. To this end, I made a steel seat pan, but decided to make it a perfect fit for me by making up, and applying, a sufficient amount of body filler to the seat, covering it in cling-film, stripping naked, plonking my bare buttocks down on the seat, and wiggling about a bit to achieve the perfect imprint. I got off and thought 'Perfect', but then noticed the two indentations at the front of the seat looked to be a bit on the small side, and also that that the cling-film had split from front to back, and that all the filler'd disappeared. Then, suddenly, I felt an intense burning sensation from where the sun doesn't shine started – that's where the filler'd gone. I think I'll be forever grateful that our NHS staff're so professional, and didn't ask how it'd happened as I really didn't feel like telling them. Anyway, the remaining filler'd dried in my absence, so I rubbed it down, smoothed it out, and made the two front indentations considerably larger.

The bike starts with a cranking handle and, once you get used to it, is really good fun to ride.



DNEPR



SPEC:
Dnepr 650cc engine (Amal Concentric carbs, alloy bell-mouths, one-off exhausts with 12-inch stubby aftermarket silencers)/frame (modified)/wheels/brakes/yokes, one-off foot-rests/hangers/controls, Kawasaki GPz 750 forks, alloy trials 'bars, aftermarket mini speedo, aftermarket fuel tank (modified), one-off seat, one-off battery box, BSA plunger rear end, one-off loom, small lithium battery

FINISH:
Olive drab paint by owner

ENGINEERING:
Everything by owner

With the other one, I was looking for another project to do in my everlasting quest to build a bike that's unique to me and my style, but that was also something that sat just right, and'd draw some interest. It had to be rideable when finished, but shiny, or based on a popular marque, doesn't float my boat, so the search was on.

Eventually I found a classic eBay purchase, a 1990 Dnepr 650 boxer flat-twin, which was all up and running, and fairly cheap. It had, though, at some point been resprayed all over (even over the forks which, by the way, were full of water – absolute nightmare!) but, thankfully, I always intended for the bike to be chopped so that meant no other bidder.

Within an hour of getting it home, the 12-inch disc cutter was put to immediate and good use – there's something very satisfying about buying a standard bike and cutting it up with a disc cutter to end up with a pile of bits. I had a clear vision of how the bike'd end up when finished and, after cutting off the headstock, and the rear end, and the dust settling, I could gather my thoughts on how the rebuild'd commence. No CAD drawings for me – it's all in my head, and allows the build to progress with some deviations from the original concept as required. I build bikes for me, not for anyone else, so there's no timescale or budget to consider, and I can build at my leisure and at my own pace; if it's not going to plan, or I get bored with it, I can leave it and continue with other projects I always have on the go, and I have enough parts kicking about that I really don't have to buy much and can upcycle/reuse bits that otherwise'd never see the light of day.

I like a lot of rake so, with this in mind, the modified front end was welded back on at a shallower angle, and Kawasaki air-assisted forks, with softer LTD springs, were incorporated, and I fabricated a plunger rear end using the axle stubs, carriers, and sliders from an old BSA. The tank, from some Chinese bike, I modified to suit the pic' in my head, welding some beads on to enhance the shape, and made the seat, too, and made some new intake manifolds so that the Amal replacement carbs sat parallel to the frame as I really didn't like the way the standard Dnepr ones bolted straight on to the heads at a weird angle. I decided to heavily baffle the high-level 'pipes I'd made as it sounded terrible with standard ones, and I really don't want to annoy my nice neighbours any more than's necessary – now it has a very deep note, and is reasonably quiet. Finally, the idea for the military green paint used also inspired me to make a torpedo-styled battery box.

I'm really pleased with how the bike's turned out. It actually handles very well, is pretty comfortable, and's great fun to ride. I use it a lot, and it was even accepted into the Kickback show where it received a lot of interest. As I said, I build my bikes for me, and I'm not worried what other people think, but I have to say it was nice meeting and chatting to people at the show, and to receive so many great comments. I'm so often locked away in my garage, not seeing another soul for ages, working away on my own thing, so it was more than pleasant when other people have an appreciation for what you spend so many hours doing.

PAUL CLARK
PICS BY **DEL HICKEY**

LEST WE FORGET
GP RIDERS
RIDERS NATIONAL RALLY 2017
decades
LEST WE FORGET
RBLR BRANCH

EVENT

OGRI MCC'S KICKSTART RALLY

AS'S BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED ON THESE PAGES OVER THE YEARS, AND IN GENERAL LIFE, TOO, THERE EXISTS AMONG BIKERS, ESPECIALLY OUR KIND OF HAIRY BIKERS (ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, WITH THE ONSET OF YEARS MOST OF US'RE A LOT LESS HAIRY THAN WE USED TO BE… 'CEPT IN OUR NOSES AND EARS), A MINDSET THAT'S BEST SUMMED UP IN THE MOST FAMOUS LINE OF THE RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE SONG 'KILLING IN THE NAME'.

BUILT IN MY SHED

Happy Birthday

GO AHEAD
YOU FUCKING SADIST
GET YOUR TITS OUT
FOR THE LADIES

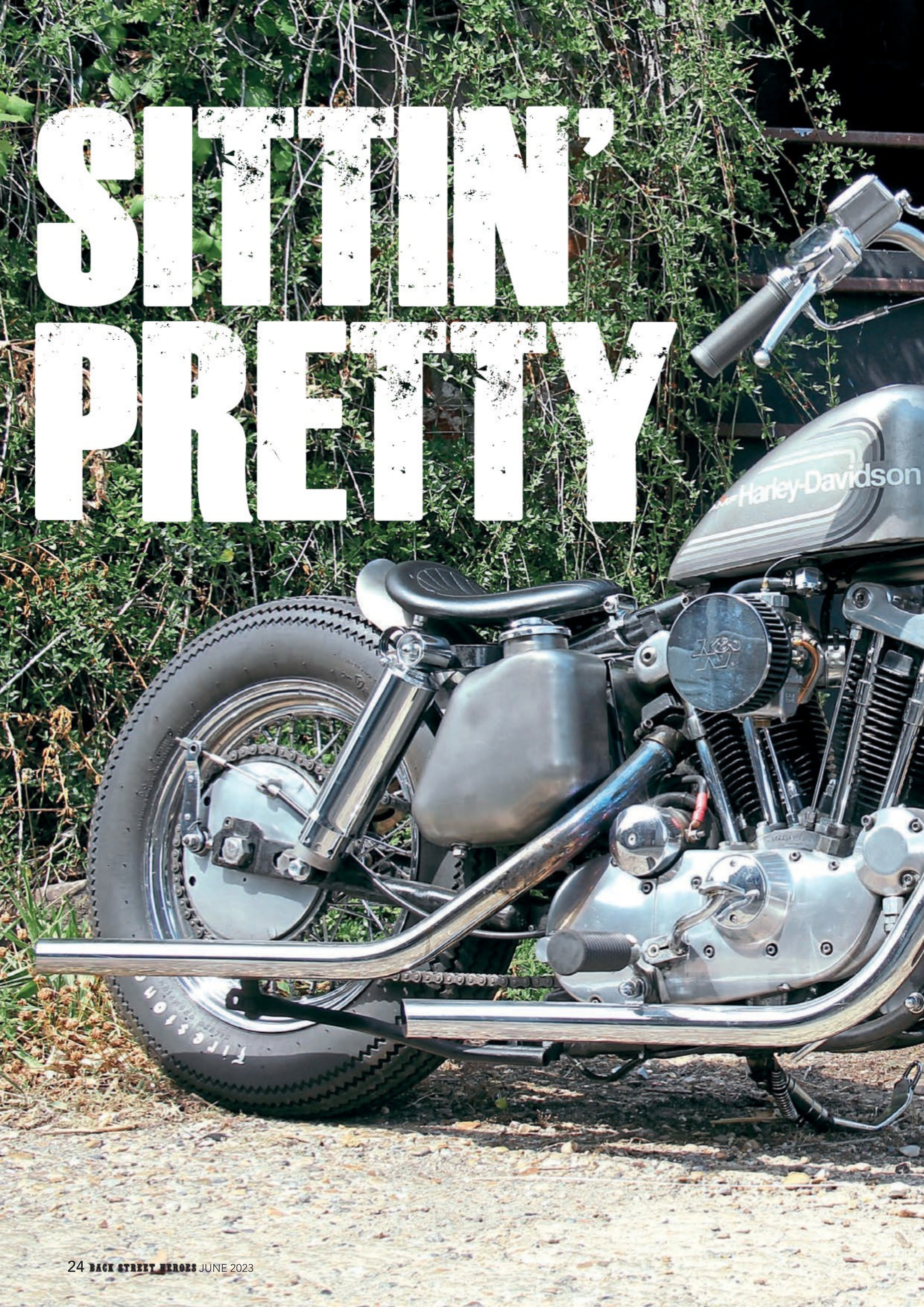
SO as to not to offend our gentler readers I won't put down the actual line in words but, suffice to say, its attitude is something that, collectively, makes us, as bikers, who we are. We're intensely loyal to our kind and lifestyle, stubborn, often bloody-minded and, yes, we don't like doing what we're told, especially when what we're told to do goes against the grain. Oddly, that can include what we're told by others of our kind, too, and winter rallying is a case in point – the majority of us look upon those who do winter rallies as ever so slightly unhinged, especially if they're of advancing years, but that matters not a jot, y'know?

The Ogri MCC's winter rally, the Kickstart, is held in January at their excellent Kemble, Gloucestershire, clubhouse site: a true biker home-from-home with an out-of-the-way location that means noise doesn't disturb anyone; flat camping; good toilets; shower facilities; a well-stocked bar (well, two actually – a 'normal' one and a very good real ale one, too); top-notch catering; a large fire-pit area with seating; and a host of staff/club members who'll serve you beer and take the piss in equal manner – what more does a biker event need?

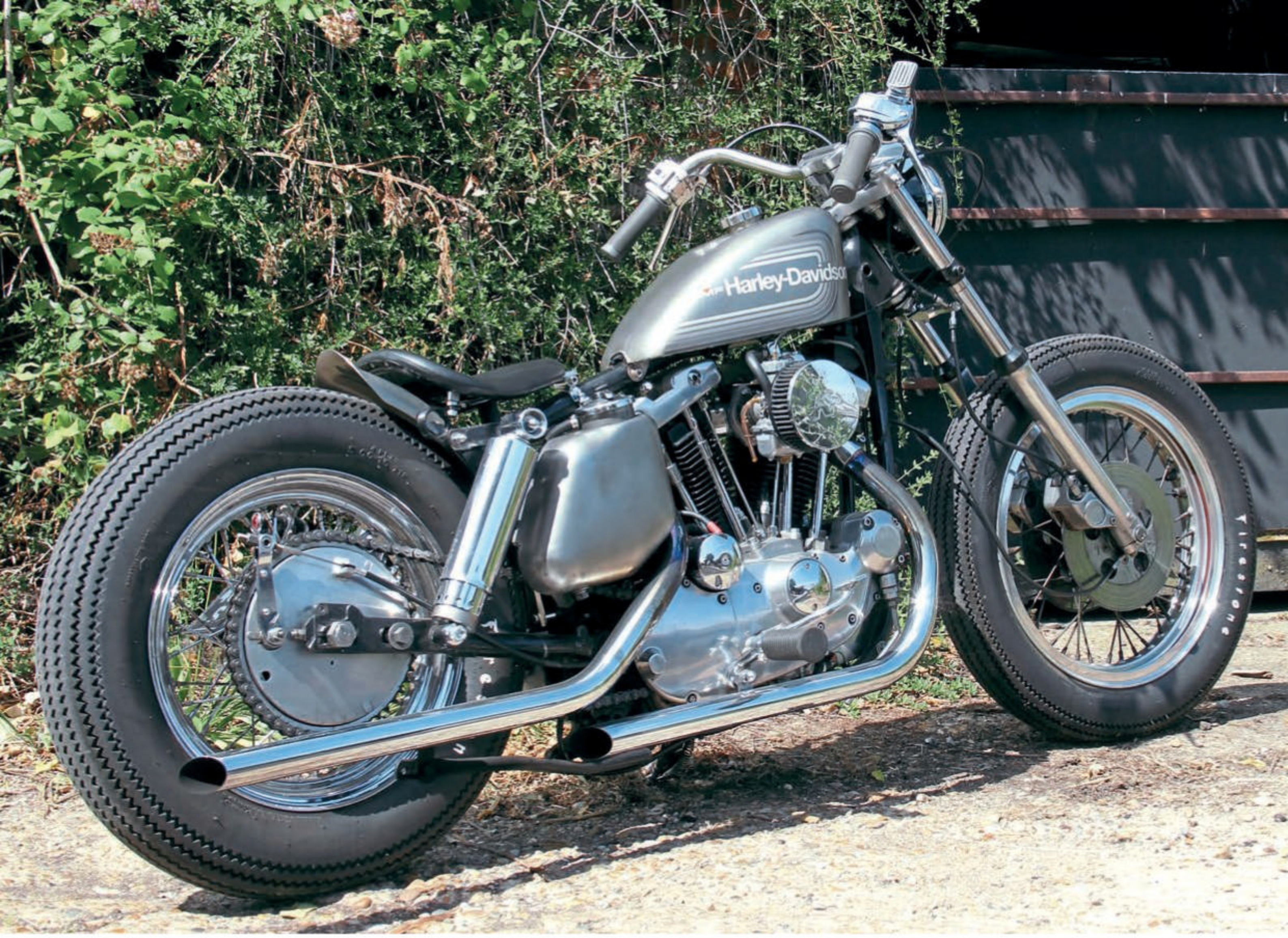
This year's Kickstart wasn't especially cold, or especially damp, but it was very much a winter rally with folk in thermals, gloves and woolly hats (and dragon onesies if you're Welsh). It was busy, too; rallyists'd come from all parts east, west, north and south, and some from across the seas, too, and do you know what? It was a bloody good laugh. These guys (and ladies o' course) are hardcore, far more hardcore than most of us (meself included); willing to take the piss out of themselves for doing something most shy away from, and both self-effacing about it, and proud of it, at the same time. It took me back to my younger, simpler, more rough n' ready days of rallying, before 'entertainment' became such an overriding part of the rally experience – just good folk, a bar, an almost continually burning bonfire, and proper biker camaraderie. It's not something I'm going to do a lot of, you understand, 'cos my achy bits really ache in the cold/damp, both from riding in the depths of winter, and from camping in it, too (although I will admit Pam and I did arrive in the van as we had a bike to pick up from That London on the way home, and so slept in relative comfort), but it did, as I said, take me back to the days when I was a lot more foolhardy and up for anything, and put a definite smile on my face. Winter rallying – if you haven't done it for a while, you ought to try it.

NIK

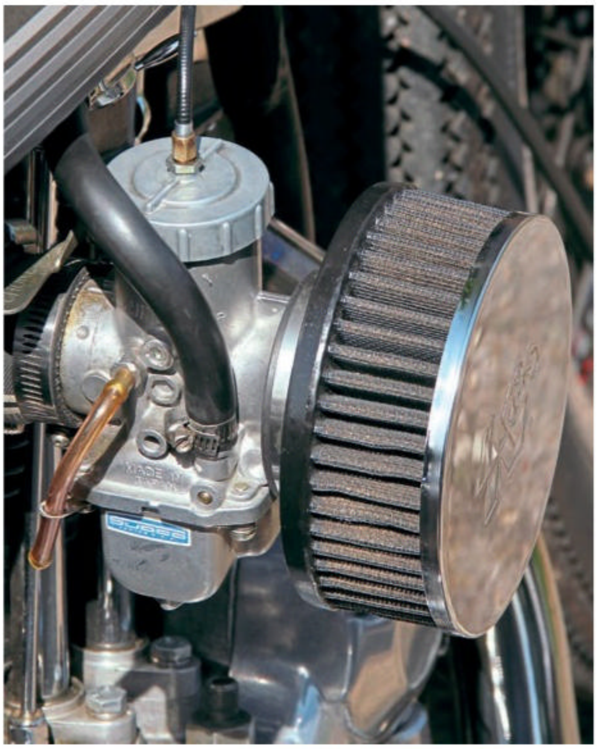
SITTIN' PRETTY


Harley-Davidson
K&N
Firestone

FOR MANY OUT THERE, BOTH OWNERS AND ASPIRATIONAL OWNERS, THE FIRST HARLEY-DAVIDSON ANY OF THEM OWN IS, YES, YOU'VE GUESSED IT, A SPORTSTER. THERE'RE A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR THIS, OF COURSE, BUT THE MAIN ONE IS THAT THEY'RE CHEAPER THAN BIG TWINS… ALTHOUGH THAT AREA'S A LITTLE GREY THESE DAYS, ISN'T IT?

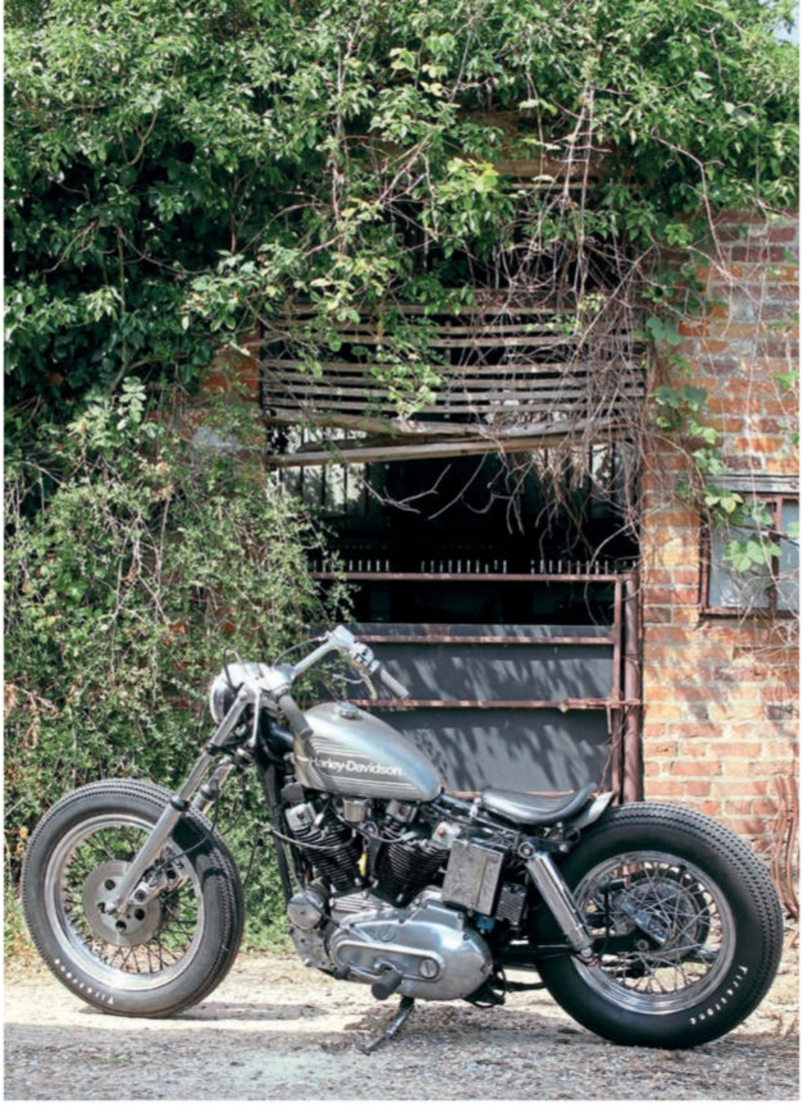

Harley-Davidson
Firestone

Harley-Davidson



MADE IN

AMF Harley-Davidson
Firestone
Firestone



Dan Roberts, the owner of this 'ere Sportster, had wanted an 'Arley (or a hog as he refers to 'em) for years – something that was continually reinforced by the fact he had mates who had 'em, and 'cos they were a regular sight and sound at his local biker-friendly pub, The Earsham Queen, as its colloquially known (The Queen's Head in Earsham, near Bungay, if you're going to look it up). He'd had bikes before, natch, but after several years of not owning one at all, he decided to take the plunge and buy his first hawg. He differs from most present-day Sporty owners, though, in that his wasn't an Evo' Sportster (built 1986 to 2020) as is more common, but an older Ironhead (so named 'cos its 'eads're made of iron), made from way back in 1957 right up until 1985. He's always liked the look and idea of them, and's always thought they were one of the nicest sounding Harleys.

Not long after making this decision, one came up for sale about an hour away from where he lived so, not wasting any time, he went straight over to have a look. Not really knowing what to expect, he was pleasantly surprised when the chap rolled it out of the garage; it was a 1978 75th anniversary (of Harley) model, and so came with twin front discs as standard, that'd been mildly customised with spoked wheels (mags as standard); a larger King Sporty tank (3.1 metric gallons, as opposed to the 1.8 US gallon original); a Biltwell Thinline seat (like the one on Mike's Triumph this issue) mounted on springs; a ribbed Lowbrow rear mudguard (a Stingray); and a few other little bits and pieces, and he could see the potential in it straightaway. A deal was done over the 'phone later that day, and he picked it up a week or so later, ordering lots of parts for it in the meantime.

He had some very definite plans, and the first thing he wanted to do was to drop it down a few inches for a more ground-hugging look, so he ordered a pair of eleven-inch shocks which'd drop it right down, but then found he had to change them for twelve-inchers as when he fitted the uber-old-school Firestones (another 'look' must-have), there wasn't enough clearance between the sixteen-inch (resized from eighteen) tyre and the subframe/mudguard. Bugger. Actually, just getting the 'Stones wasn't the easiest thing either; one had to come from Italy, and the other from Germany!

The tank was unpainted when he got the bike, and he quite liked that bare metal look, so decided to try and keep it that way. He didn't just want a plain tank though, so bought some original decals for a '76 model (yes, he's aware it's a '78, but the '76 had nicer decals) off a Belgian outfit called Rust is Gold (www.rustisgold.co) who specialise in Ironheads. That done, he then matt lacquered the tank, three coats, but wasn't entirely happy with the results so sprayed it over again with a progressive number of coats of boiled linseed oil until he was satisfied with the look. In fact, it turned out so well he decided to do not just the oil tank (which, after he'd stripped off at least three layers of paint, and cleaned the metal off, revealed the outline of the original decals sun-bleached into the metal, he decided looked cool in the right light), but also the Lowbrow rear muddie (after he'd cut it right back to show off the rear tyre, and mounted it off the top shock mounts). With that done, a front mudguard'd just look odd, so he shaved the forks of the (very!) ugly mounts, and the absolutely gopping reflector housings, too, and added a set of stainless buckhorn 'bars, and suitable grips and 'pegs an' stuff (including a neat little side-mount with a Lucas replica light on it). The seat's the Biltwell one it came with, but remounted on to the frame with the springs just acting as brackets to hold it in place, and not to act as springs – as anyone with any sense (or taste!) knows, sprung seats and shocks together's not good either in ride or look.

He knows that in the grand scheme of things all he's really done is improve the appearance of the stock bike – there's no major engineering going on, it's purely, really, only cosmetics, but when a bike looks this good, who cares? He's good mates with Chris Brown, whose Shovel was in the last issue, and it was him that told me the bike was good – praise enough for anything! It's been on the road a few years, and's been very reliable and caused him little grief (yeah, the odd little thing's rattled loose, but…), and it's made him wish he'd gone the hog route years ago.

Mind you, since these pics were taken, he's bought another Harley – a rather special '66 Pan/Shovel off Chris and, to fund it, and putting his mark on it, he's had to sell the Ironhead. Yes, he is absolutely gutted to have to let it go, but the silver lining in the cloud is that he's sold it to Dave at the Bull in the Woods brewery, where the local guys go for a beer every Friday (it's his first Harley, too!), and so at least he gets to see it most weeks. Hmm, I get where he's coming from, definitely, but is that a good thing or not?

SPEC:
1978 H-D XLH 1000 Sportster engine (Mikuni 38mm carb, K&N air-filter, Dyna electronic ignition, chromed 40-inch drag 'pipes)/frame/front wheel/brakes/forks (modified)/yokes/headlight/front brake master-cylinder/swingarm/oil tank/battery cover, aftermarket foot-controls, Bridgestone Champion Deluxe tyres (19x4-inch front, 16x5-inch rear), stainless buckhorn 'bars, King Sporty three-gallon tank, Biltwell Thinline solo tuck n' roll seat with aftermarket springs, Lowbrow Customs six-inch Stingray rear 'guard (modified), 12-inch covered rear shocks, aftermarket side-mount, Lucas replica tail-light

FINISH:
Bare metal tanks/rear 'guard/frame with 1976 tank decals/matt lacquer/three coats boiled linseed oil

ENGINEERING:
Bike built by owner with help from Chris & Hoffy

THANKS TO:
"Chris & Hoffy for advice & tools…"

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‡WAS ~~£358.80~~ inc.VAT #WAS ~~£442.80~~ inc.VAT

Model	Motor	CFM	Tank	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
Ranger 8/25*	2HP	7	24ltr	£119.98	£143.98
Ranger 8/50■	2HP	7	50ltr	£169.98	£203.98
Raider 15/550‡	3HP	14.5	50ltr	£269.00	£322.80
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CBB209C	9 dr chest	£159.98	~~£203.98~~	£191.98
CTC700C	7 dr cabinet	£169.98	~~£215.98~~	£203.98
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model	Motor (W) Speeds	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
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CDP102B	350/5	£115.95	£139.14
CDP152B	450/12	£209.98	£251.98
CDP202B	450/16	£269.00	£322.80
CDP352F*	550/16	£339.00	£406.80
CDP452B#	550/16	£339.00	£406.80
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MIG106	40/100	£179.00	–	£214.80
MIG145	35/135	£239.00	–	£286.80
MIG196	40/180	£279.00	–	£334.80
MIG240	50/240	£489.00	~~£598.80~~	£586.80

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CW1D	45Ltrs	Floor	£149.98	~~£191.98~~	£179.98
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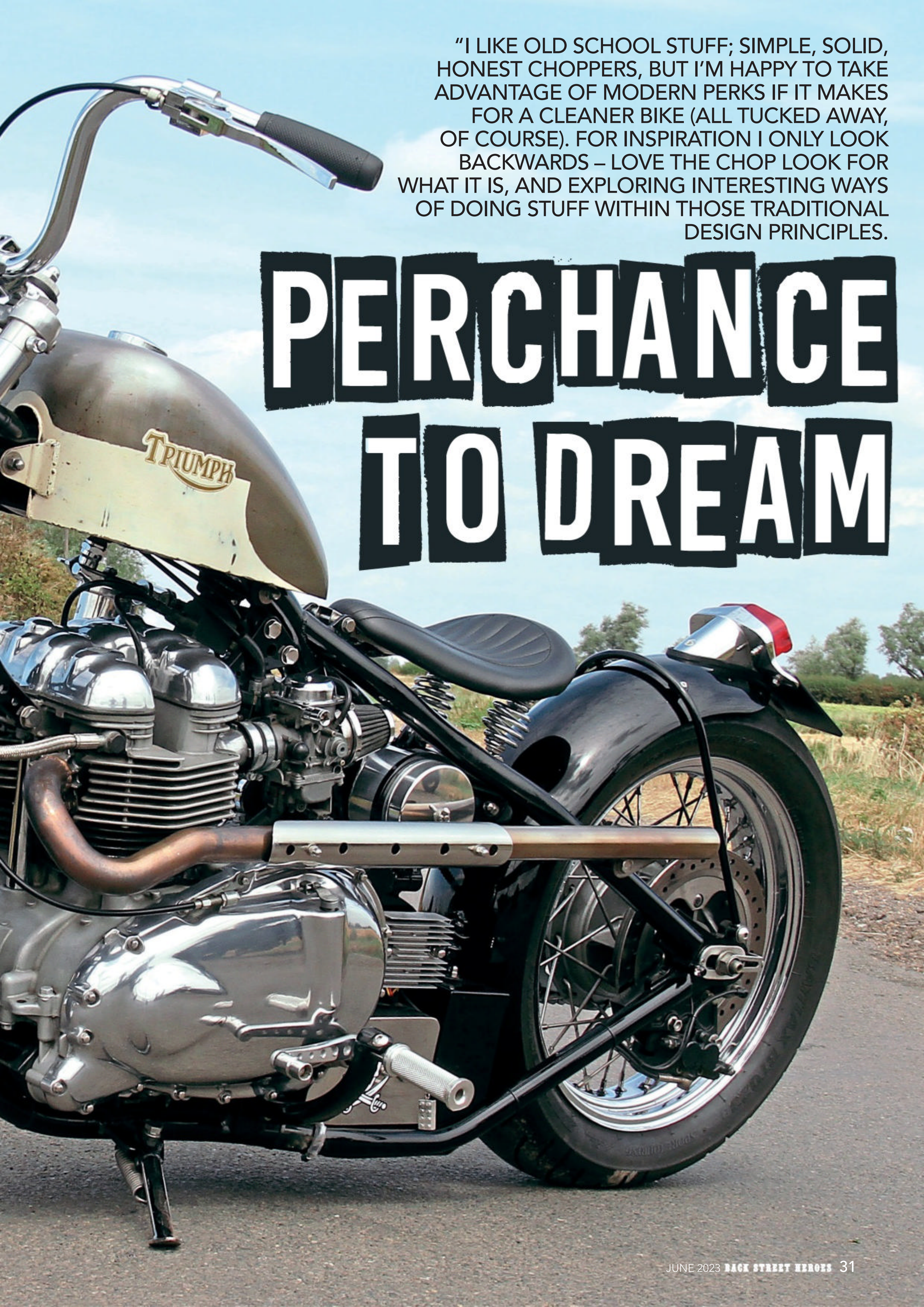
“I LIKE OLD SCHOOL STUFF; SIMPLE, SOLID, HONEST CHOPPERS, BUT I’M HAPPY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MODERN PERKS IF IT MAKES FOR A CLEANER BIKE (ALL TUCKED AWAY, OF COURSE). FOR INSPIRATION I ONLY LOOK BACKWARDS – LOVE THE CHOP LOOK FOR WHAT IT IS, AND EXPLORING INTERESTING WAYS OF DOING STUFF WITHIN THOSE TRADITIONAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES.

PERCHANCE TO DREAM



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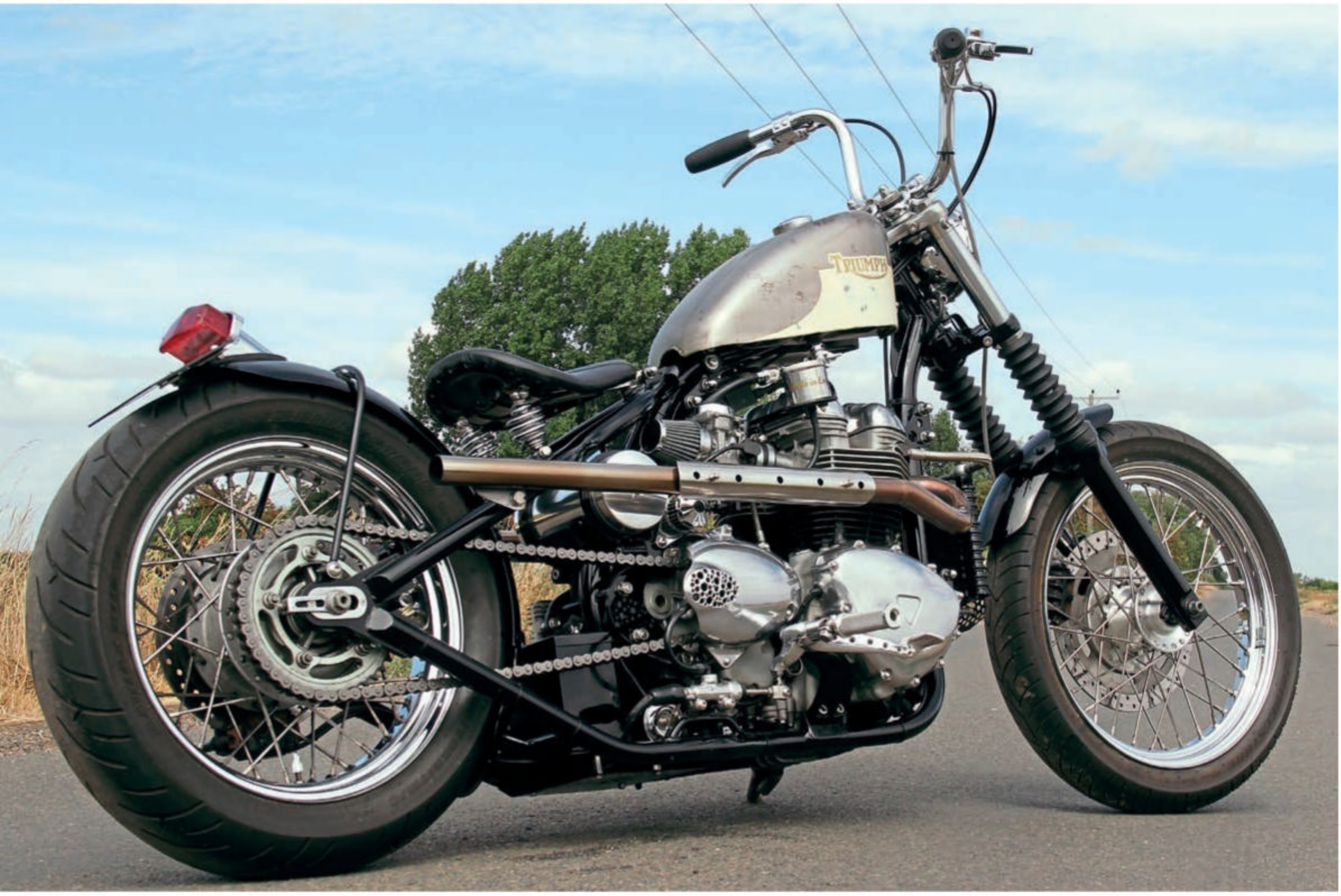
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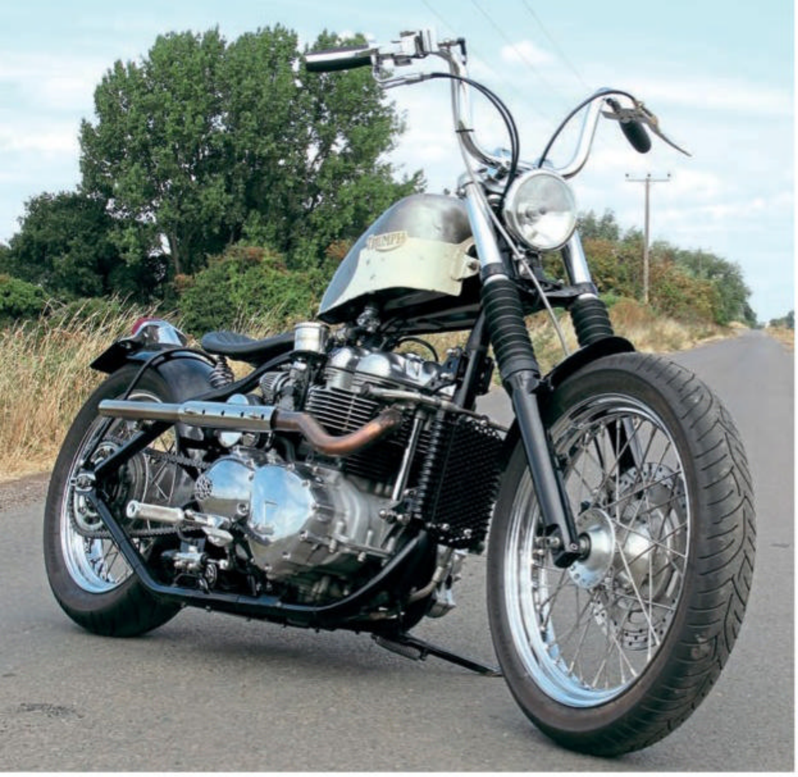

The bike, a 2006 790cc Hinckley Bonneville, was bought from a chap called Bert Chandler; an awesome bike builder, all-round top bloke, and the man who sold me my first hardtail. I'd been looking for a carbed Hinckley as a donor, preferably one that'd been hardtailed, and found this one, and it was a step up again – a rare find. Using a photo, I did a fast draw-over with my mate Craig whilst working (okay, so not actually working) late one night to ensure it'd be exactly what I had planned, and then shot up to Oxford to see Bert. I hadn't actually committed to buying the bike, but the more we drank tea, and the more I talked with him, the more it all added up (plus the bike had a ridiculous full Triumph service history, and'd been built from a bike with only 4.5k on the clock, and'd done only another 1k since the build). I think it was Bert who actually decided I could take the bike, rather than me tell him – I didn't even haggle as it felt kind o' disrespectful to an old school guy helping me into the scene. I'd love to know what he thinks of what I've done – so much of his hard work still sits at the centre of this build's success.

Style-wise, it was much about looking as traditional as it could be, and I like to think of it as a 'sleeper', both in terms of modern power, but also in all the work, and detail, on close inspection. The frame'd been done by Roger Allmond at Allmond Cycle Design, in 2013, to look like a traditional hardtail, using the stock Triumph running gear (but with an extra two inches in the forks), and was solid enough – I just needed to personalise it. I'd always planned to use a smaller, 2.4-gallon, Sporty tank, but when I tried one out it just didn't sit right, so it was changed for a 3.1-gallon King Sporty – better proportioned with the block, and therefore a better overall composition (and good for 100 miles plus). When I first built it (about seven years ago), it kind o' had the same layout as it does currently, but'd been pro painted in a metallic gunmetal for the body, and metalflake white for the panel, and was shiny like an apple. I was trying to mix a modern product with an old school look, and it wasn't quite right so this is version two, which I did in my workshop at home – the panel is actually Hammerite, sanded back, and the underside got sprayed black for low maintenance (I only lacquered the black – I keep the rest oiled up, and the look gets better with some controlled deterioration). Similarly, originally there was a beautifully made, but rock-hard, brown leather saddle, mounted on mountain bike shocks, but they were far too hard, and the brown just didn't sit right with the understated look. I bought a Biltwell Thinline solo, and a pair of two-inch springs, and made a new mount, and it now looks right and doesn't fire me out of the saddle too much.

As with many parts of this bike, most of the work went into the bits you don't notice: routing wires, concealing modern necessities, and making things fit just right – the rear 'guard and hoop being an example of this. 'Chopper fenders don't have to fit perfect' is something I absolutely agree with – it's all about the look you're chasing, or what you've got to work with, but I wanted to see how good I could get on this bike. Long story, and a longer list of mudguards, this one sits bang on with an even radius all the way round between it and the tyre. Once I had it right, I then needed to get the hoop (struts) spot on to hold everything perfectly, but not being able to weld it all whilst in situ was a struggle – I had to make a crazy jig up to keep everything in place, and then transport it to my welder, as I had to have that iconic Triumph hoop and trad' Lucas lens for the rear end.

The original engine mounts were well made and not top of my list, but eventually I got to them. I scanned them on to my computer, redrew them, and talked to my mate Dan into modelling them up in CAD, producing the right file format for cutting. He made me laser-cut MDF prototypes, so I could double-check the fit and adjust before cutting in metal, and the final brackets were ordered online from Fractory (www.fractory.com – super-helpful people) in 8mm stainless (even though I ended up powdering them). Thanks Dan, and whoever was actually paying you at the time.

SPEC:
2006 Triumph Bonneville 790 engine (Dynojetted carbs, aftermarket air-filters, one-off stainless 'pipes/shields, 10mm socket choke knob, Bonneville America throttle cables, homemade clutch cable)/wheels/brakes/forks (2-inch over)/yokes (modified top)/rear master-cylinder (relocated), 2013 Allmond Cycle Design custom hardtail frame (integrated battery/electrics boxes, custom engine mounts/bash plate, 2004 H-D Sportster mid-controls (modified), Biltwell Rocker 'pegs, 13mm socket shifter, Bridgestone Battlax tyres (19-inch front, 17-inch rear), HEL braided brake lines, Biltwell Chumps 1-inch 'bars (internally wired), offset dog-bone risers (inverted mounts), MCS levers, Koso D55 speedo (one-off mount), Biltwell Recoil grips, aftermarket front mudguard (modified), King Sportster 3.1-gallon tank, Biltwell Thinline solo seat with 2-inch springs/custom mounts, Penz Customs 170 rear 'guard (modified), one-off mudguard loop, one-off internally-wired loom with micro-switches, Badlands control unit, aftermarket Bates-style headlight/tail-light, Motogadget M-Blaze indicators (extended rear mounts)

FINISH:
Black frame (previous owner), raw tank by owner, black 'guards by Lil' Jim, powder-coating by Morley Bros (**01223 423048** or **www.morleybrothersltd.co.uk**), polishing by owner

ENGINEERING:
Bike originally built by Bert, reworked by owner

THANKS TO:
"Zak, for the late nights & heavy hands; Dan; M&M Motorcycles (**01223 863668** or **www.m-mmotorcycles.co.uk**); The Tramps; my old man; my wife Jo for her never-ending patience; & Bert for passing custodianship & laying down a killer base…"

Internally wiring the 'bars was a bastard job; firstly because, as it's a 2006 bike, there're a lot of wires to hide (separate L/R indicators, starter, horn, etc.), and, secondly, because after I wired them I realised I needed a front brake switch for the MoT, and obviously wanted to tuck away that wiring, too, and, thirdly, because I then changed my mind on the 'bars. Twice.

Have you noticed the sockets? There's a 13mm socket for a (gear) shifter, and a 10mm on the choke. The shifter's one of those instances where I just needed a short-term fix, but it turned out so nice I decided to keep it – it locks around an M8 hex as the bolt passes through, therefore screwed in as one unit like the original. The 10mm was just a continuation of the idea (I took off a perfectly good choke knob), and they're handy sockets to have on board – just need to work a wrench in somewhere.

The obvious challenge with this bike was, being a modern one, all the extra bits you need to hide when trying to slip it into a vintage crowd. Some of that's using period design cues, and the other is hiding, or disguising, all the pesky modern gizmos – it's this that takes the time, but rarely gets noticed. It's worked though; every time someone compliments me on my 'nice old Triumph', even reminiscing how they had one as a lad in the late '60s, they have no idea how happy it makes me."

DIRTY MIKE
PICS BY **NIK**

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FEST

EVENT

2023 INDIAN RIDERS FEST

THE 2023 INDIAN RIDERS FEST'S EXPECTED TO BE THE LARGEST GATHERING OF INDIAN MOTORCYCLE RIDERS IN THE WORLD!

Just Ride
INDIAN RIDERS
FEST

Indian Motorcycle's announced official support for the 2023 staging of the Indian Riders Fest (IRF), which's expected to be the world's largest gathering of Indian Motorcycle owners following the impressive attendance at the 2022 event. Located in Ceské Budejovice (Budweis), Czech Republic, the festival'll centre around a large event village in the city exhibition grounds, and'll see a rich programme of events from June 9-11.

The IRF was born from the desire of organiser Jean-Marie Guyon to bring riders from Europe and beyond to Budweis, regardless of language or cultural background, to share their passion for the iconic Indian Motorcycle brand, and have an incredible weekend. Expectations are high that 2023 could set new records after IRF 2022 saw more than 2,500 motorcycles attend the festival, and the celebratory parade featured 1200 Indian Motorcycles.

"IRF 2023'll include all the elements that made previous editions successful, beginning with freedom and friendship. The Indian Riders Festival's undoubtedly an international event, with attendees from over 37 nations, and the organisation team's thrilled to welcome Indian Motorcycle again as a main partner," said Jean-Marie.

"Our Indian Motorcycle Riders groups throughout Europe have really gained momentum in recent years, and the desire for a special destination event's evident from the outstanding success of IRF 2022. Interest in the festival's only continued to grow, and I feel certain the 2023 event'll again be the largest gathering of Indian Motorcycle owners anywhere in the world. We're delighted to continue and expand our support for the IRF, and I really look forward to being among the riders in June," said Grant Bester, Vice President International for Indian Motorcycle.

Just a short walk from the city centre, the event village'll welcome riders with a large Indian Motorcycle area and, to kick off the weekend's events, a big live concert'll be followed by a DJ-led after-party on the Friday evening.

With a genuine apparel shop, the Indian Motorcycle Roadshow truck'll be offering test rides on the latest models, an official Indian Motorcycle Dealership presence providing

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full servicing and maintenance, and festival goers'll also have plenty of entertainment, and shopping opportunities from more than 100 exhibitors and stands, plus the chance to win a customised Indian Challenger in the big prize raffle.

In addition to more live concerts throughout the weekend, creative talent'll be on display in the Custom Indian Motorcycle Show; heritage'll on show in the Vintage Motorcycle Exhibition; The Lucky Daredevils'll defy gravity on the famous Wall of Death; Martin Krátky'll perform stunts on his Indian FTR; and there'll be expert riding of a different kind of thrills in the regular rodeo shows.

The Saturday parade has become a famous highlight of the festival, and has grown from 465 Indian Motorcycles in 2019 to 1,200 last year. The organisers're preparing a new 25km route on roads closed especially for the ride in anticipation of breaking the 2,000 Indian Motorcycle mark. The ride'll also put a spotlight on women bikers with the Ladies First group heading the parade after the success of this initiative in 2022. After a ride through the beautiful Bohemia area, the parade'll finish at the heart of the city in the Premysl Otakar II square, providing a spectacular photo opportunity as the Indian Motorcycle Riders groups lay their flags in the centre of the historic square, surrounded by their motorcycles.

For those who'd like to attend the festival, but can't ride to the event, there's the option to hire an Indian Motorcycle on-site over four- to six-day periods through the official rental partner, ZM-Moto. Rentals'll be available on-site from as early as Tuesday, June 6, and there's a choice of 17 Indian Motorcycles across the Scout, FTR, Chief, Chieftain and Springfield model ranges. Prices start at €184 per day based on a six-day rental of an Indian Scout.

The Indian Riders Fest's become an essential date for European riders, welcoming everyone regardless of motorcycle brand, and tickets're selling fast. Interested riders should head to the festival's website to secure their tickets for a great summer weekend with like-minded people.

As we said last issue, the Indian Riders Fest, organised in conjunction with Indian Motorcycle, Dr. Jekill & Mr. Hyde, Custom Chrome Europe, and Wunderkind-Custom, will also feature the Budweis Custom Show (BCS), approved as a round of the AMD Custom Bike Championship. Anyone wishing to enter their bike in the show can do so simply by going to www.indianridersfest.eu/budweis-custom-show and registering there. Entry is free, and you can also enter on the weekend, but if you register upfront you get free Budvar Original Czech Beer. Additionally, pre-registered participants selected for the Budweis Custom Show will receive free access to the Indian Riders Fest event, which includes three IRF23 Full Access Passes for themselves, their team, crew, or buddies.

For more info' on the event go to the Indian Riders Fest website at www.indianridersfest.eu or check out the Facebook page (IndianRidersFestBudweis), Instagram (indianridersfest), or YouTube (indianridersfest). To rent a bike, go to the Indian Riders Fest e-shop at **www.eshop.indianridersfest.eu**

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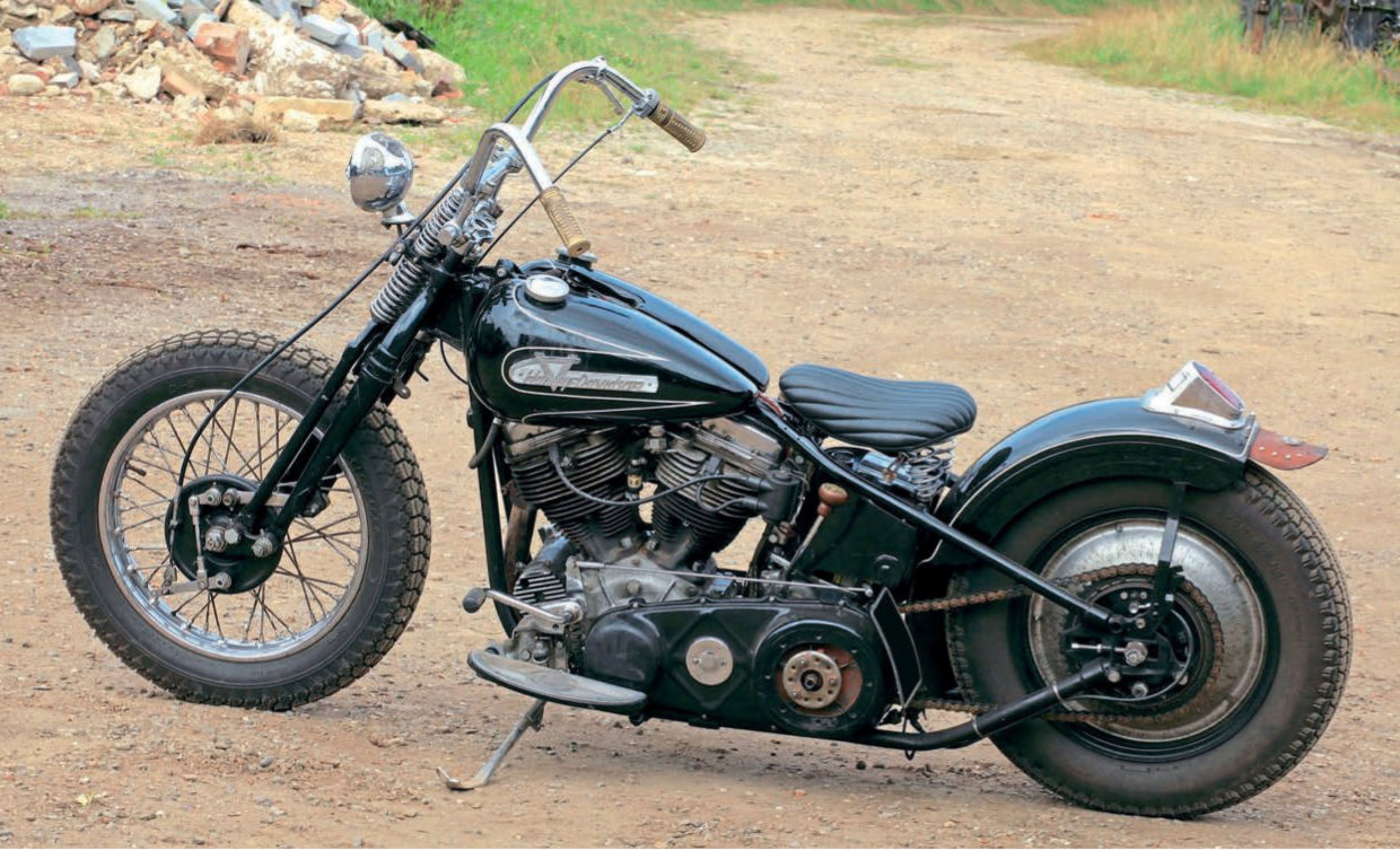
*and the rest...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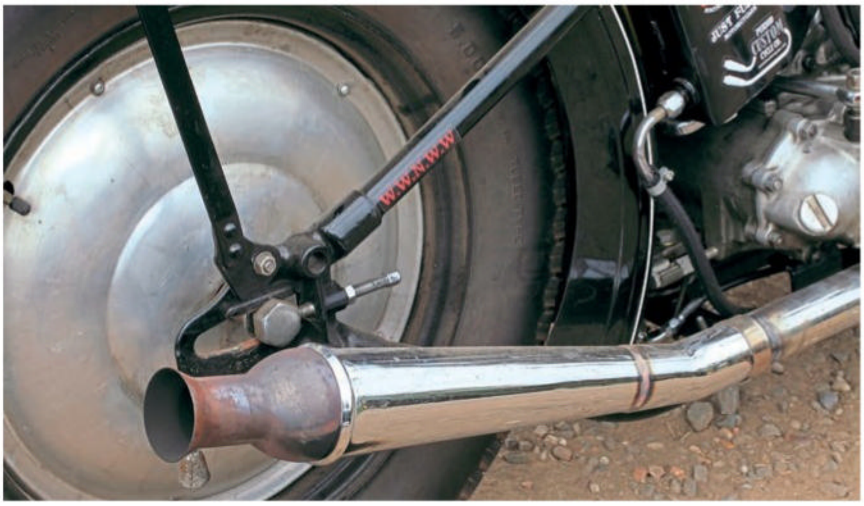
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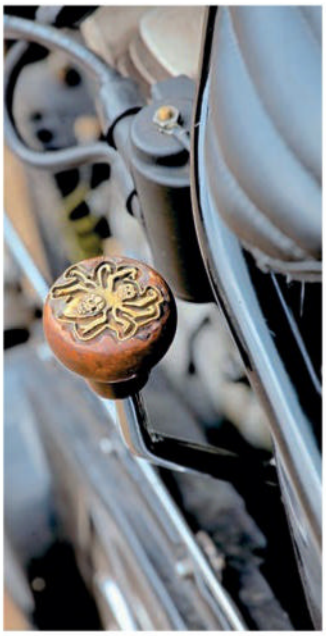
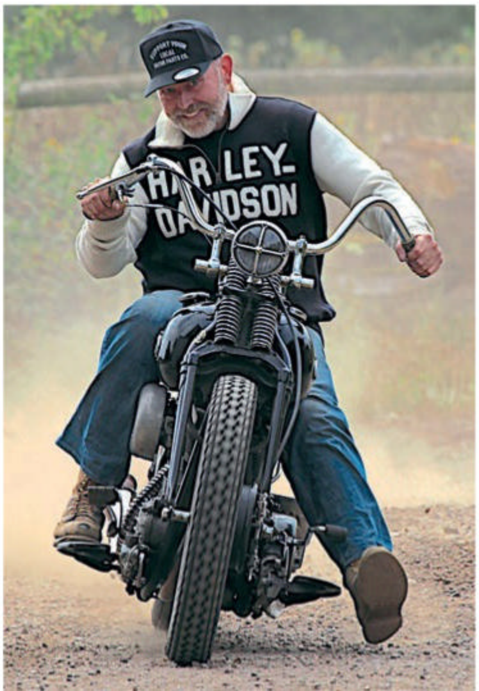
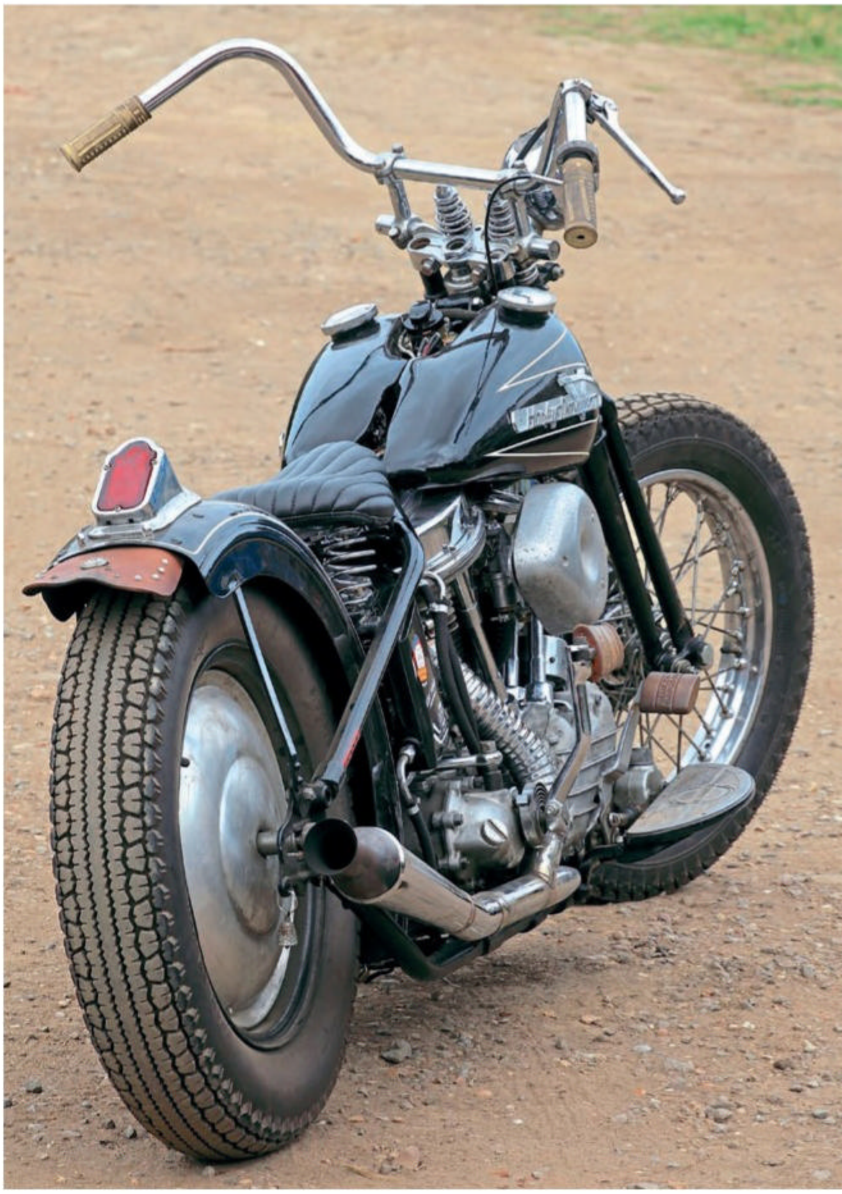



HARLEY-
DAVIDSON

For Spike Judd from the wilds (well…) of Suffolk, the first lockdown was not only a government-enforced eight-week paid holiday, but also a fairly frantic eight-week bike building schedule as, not long after it started, he got a 'phone call from a mate with a rather cool old ('40s/50s) 74-inch (1200cc) Panhead Harley who'd kind o' lost interest in it and, knowing Spike desired it almost carnally (so, okay, perhaps not that much), offering it to him. It was, in his own words (Spike's, not the mate's), a fairly decent Duo-Glide (Duo-Glide Pans were the first H-Ds to have front AND rear suspension, telescopic forks up front and twin shocks at the rear, hence the 'Duo'; the previous model, the Hydra-Glide, just had telescopic forks – hydraulic telescopic forks, hence the 'Hydra'), although it'd been off the road for four or five years, but he'd wanted, ever since he'd first seen it, to turn it into a classic-looking bobber and, within an hour of the 'phone call, he'd been over, bought it, got it home, and started stripping it down.



With the bike in bits, the '59 drop-seat frame was taken over to Jay at Heron Cycles (formerly So Low Choppers) just north-east of Bury St Edmunds to be hardtailed, and the tanks (petrol, and oil), rear muddie (suitably bobbed, o' course), and a few other select parts, too, were taken to his painters of choice, LA Custom Coatings in Dereham over the border in that there Norfolk. He had a suitable set of springers on another bike waiting in the wings, along with a fair collection of other parts he'd accumulated over the years, and the plan was to build, as I said, a classic-style bobber in just the eight weeks of lockdown (although, of course, with the benefit of hindsight, we know the lockdown went on a lot longer) as kind of a shakedown for what he was going to do when he actually gives up work and retires.

Anyway, the frame came back from Jay very quickly (he doesn't hang about, y'know), and that, too, went off to Luke and Aaron at LA CC for paint, and came back again almost as quickly (almost…), and Sam, his eldest lad, gave him a hand putting the 1949 motor in. With that done, and all the other jobs he could do done, too, he started to fret about the rest of the painted parts not arriving in time as, as we all know, that first lockdown was an odd time for all of us; no one knew how people'd react to such a massive upheaval in their lives – would they take the eight-week holiday they were offered or would they continue to work in isolation? Thankfully, Luke and the chaps dropped everything (not literally, thankfully), and got it all back to him within hours of their deadline.

With all the bits back, it was simply a case of putting it all back together (he said blithely), although it was slightly complicated by Mr J's decision to build the bike on one of those alloy builder's hop-up thingies (look it up, I had to), and although it made life easier by putting everything at a comfortable working height, getting the finished bike off it was a somewhat trying experience requiring the use of several hydraulic jacks, scaffold boards, ropes, and a certain amount of prayer to get it on the ground. Spike'd like, particularly, to thank Bean at Bean's Paint & Parts, who'd continued to work in isolation, too, for dropping off parts (and advice) at the gate on his way home and, he says, the eight weeks passed in a series of long country walks, baking, bike building, and 2pm cocktail hours that usually finished about 8pm. Lucky sod – I worked all the way through, none of the above for me…

SPEC:
1949 H-D 74-inch Panhead engine (Andrews A/B grind cam, S&S Super E carb, S&S air-cleaner back-plate, early round air-cleaner cover, BDL 1.5" belt-driven primary, 4-speed ratchet-top gearbox, suicide clutch/jockey shift, 2-1 exhaust with chrome heat-shielding/modified cocktail shaker), 1959 H-D Panhead drop-seat frame (modified), period foot-boards, Firestone ANS front tyre, 18-inch TLS springer drum front wheel, stock springers, Flanders-style 'bars, waffle grips/pedals/kicker-pedal, stock 3.5-gallon fatbobs, Bates seat, bobber rear mudguard, horseshoe oil tank, 16-inch H-D wheel, Panhead beauty disc, H-D juice brake, Avon Speedmaster tyre, minimal loom, Pontiac fog light as headlight, H-D tombstone rear light

FINISH:
Black with cream scallops & pin-striping by LA Custom Coatings (**01362 693407** or Facebook)

ENGINEERING:
Bike built by owner, hardtail by Jay at Heron Cycles (**01359 25360** or Facebook)

THANKS TO:
"LA Custom Coatings; Bean at Bean's Paint & Parts (**01507 499117** or Facebook); Sumo at Vintage Chop (**07421 993106** or **www.vintagechop.com**); Emma Stokes Leather; Jay & Hip at Heron Cycles; & Dreadlock Andy for checking everything over & making it sure it was safe…"

Anyway, the finished bobber fired up second kick, and's since become a firm favourite. It's done a 2,000-mile plus European trip, including all 46 hairpins of the famous Stelvio Pass on the Austrian/Italian border, with no issues – not bad for a homemade mo'cycle with a 74-year-old engine, eh? The next planned trip is to Spain in the summer; again a big ask for a big ol' air-cooled bike of that age, but one that, I feel, it, and Spike, will just take in their stride. He's made a few minor changes to it to make life slightly easier for these longer runs (a 19-inch black front rim and stainless spokes, rather than the 18 it had before, and slightly lower, but still Flanders-style, puting 'bars by Sumo at Vintage Chop), as this one's for keeping – as he says, it's hardly a flash in the pan.

NIK
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Five years (well, this year's the fifth!) now we've been running the BSH Custom Championships, and it's turned out to be the biggest custom show in the world, with over 4,000 entrants to date!

For 2023 we've had a bit of a rethink, a bit of a shake-up, of how we do things, and we've made some significant changes. Don't worry, the basics are still the same, and it's still free to enter, but we're making it a little more inclusive – a little better basically!

This year there are seven rounds – three online, and four real-world. The real-world rounds are:

THE SCOTTISH MOTORCYCLE SHOW (ALREADY BEEN)

THE NCC LONDON DIAMOND DAY AT THE ACE CAFÉ, LONDON (1 JULY)

THE ROCK & BLUES, DERBYSHIRE (27-30 JULY)

NE MAG'S STORMIN' THE CASTLE, WITTON-LE-WEAR, COUNTY DURHAM (1-3 SEPTEMBER)

To enter, simply turn up at any, or all, of those events, pay the required event fee (if there is one), and put your bike in their show – simple as that!

The online rounds are:

JUNE
JULY
AUGUST

To enter, simply go to the BSH Facebook Page or Group, find the relevant thread, and post a picture of your bike on it – it really is as easy as that! You can do it each month if you wish, as winners will be chosen at the end of each so if you don't win one month you can always have another go the next!

THERE ARE FIVE CATEGORIES:

1. **BEST CHOPPER**
2. **BEST CUSTOM**
3. **BEST ENGINEERING**
4. **BEST PAINT**
5. **BEST NEW SKOOL CUSTOM** (CAFE RACER, STREET SCRAMBLER, ETC.)

The winners of each round'll receive a rather cool trophy, and all winners go on to be judged by an expert panel of people who really know what they're looking at, and those five winners overall'll go on to be the stars of our new Back Street Heroes Custom World display at the vaunted Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show, organised by our parent company Mortons Media, at the Stafford Showground in Stafford over the weekend of 14-15 October, where there'll be more trophies, prizes, and all sorts of other good stuff going on. You can enter as many times as you like, so if you don't win first go, keep trying!

As I said, the first round, at the Scottish Motorcycle Show, has been and gone, and the winners were:

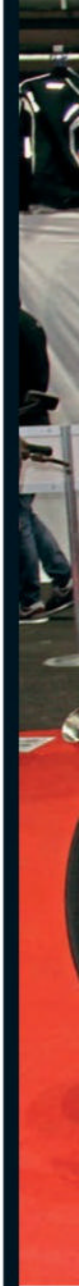
BEST CHOPPER – ALEX DUNCAN'S IRONHEAD

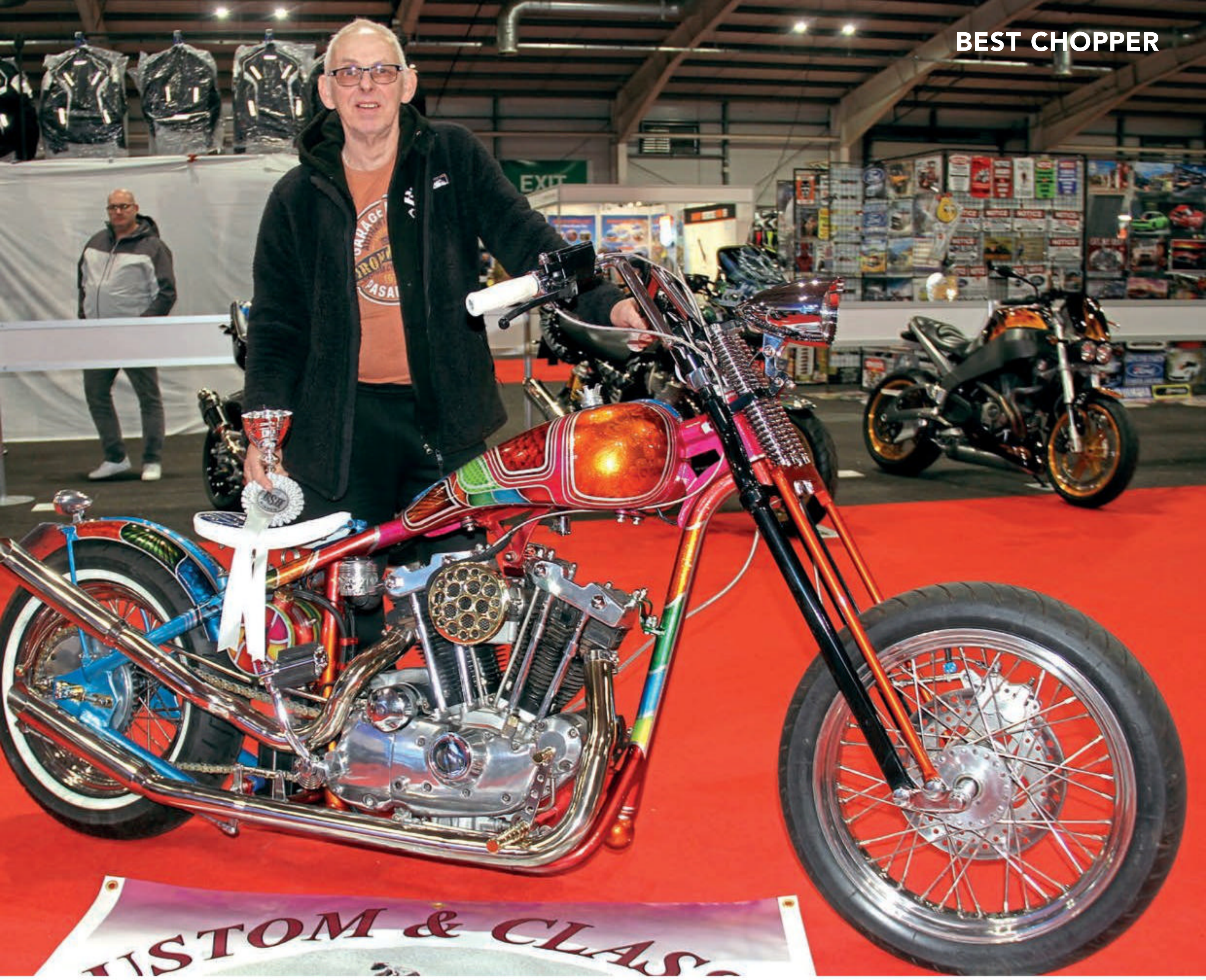
BEST CUSTOM – ROBERT'S PATINA KNUCKLEHEAD

BEST ENGINEERING – YANTOSH'S TRICK-FRAME GIXER THOU

BEST PAINT – JOHN GAINSBOROUGH'S SPONDON, PAINTED BY GUS AT MUDDY BEACH CUSTOMS

BEST NEW SKOOL – GRAHAM TAIT'S YAMAHA VIRAGO CAFÉ RACER

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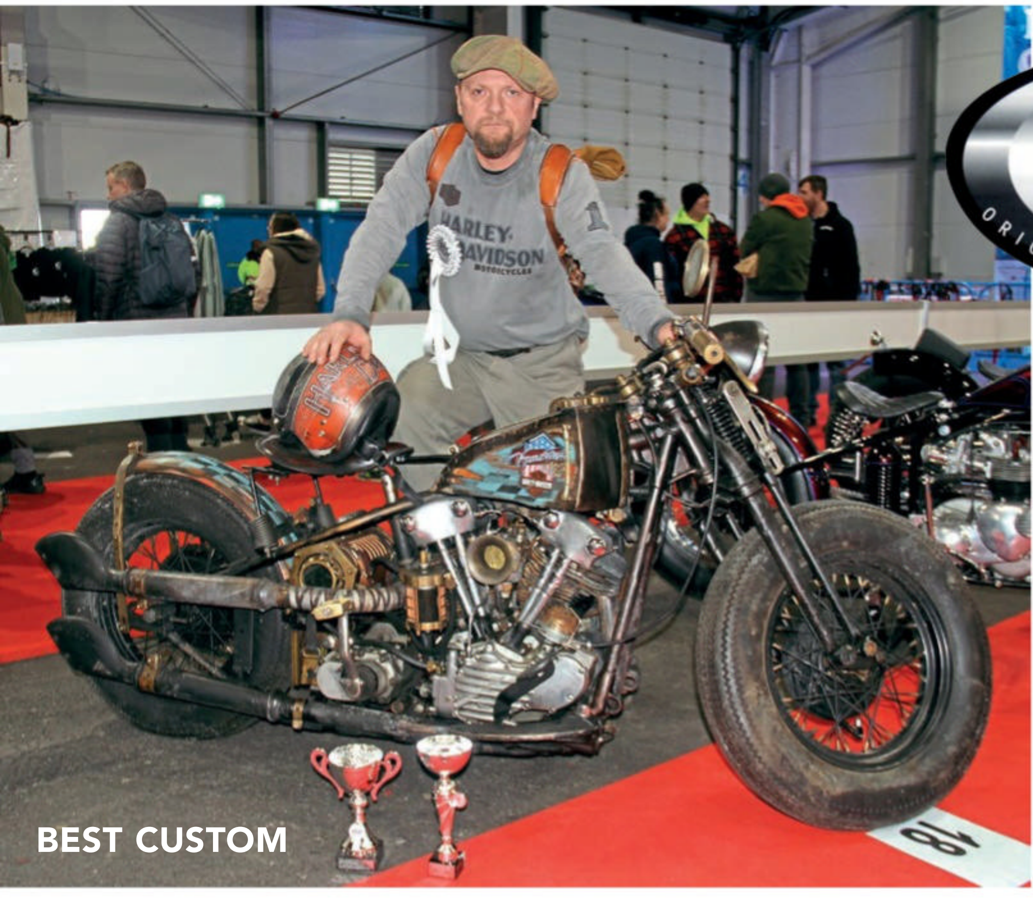
BEST CHOPPER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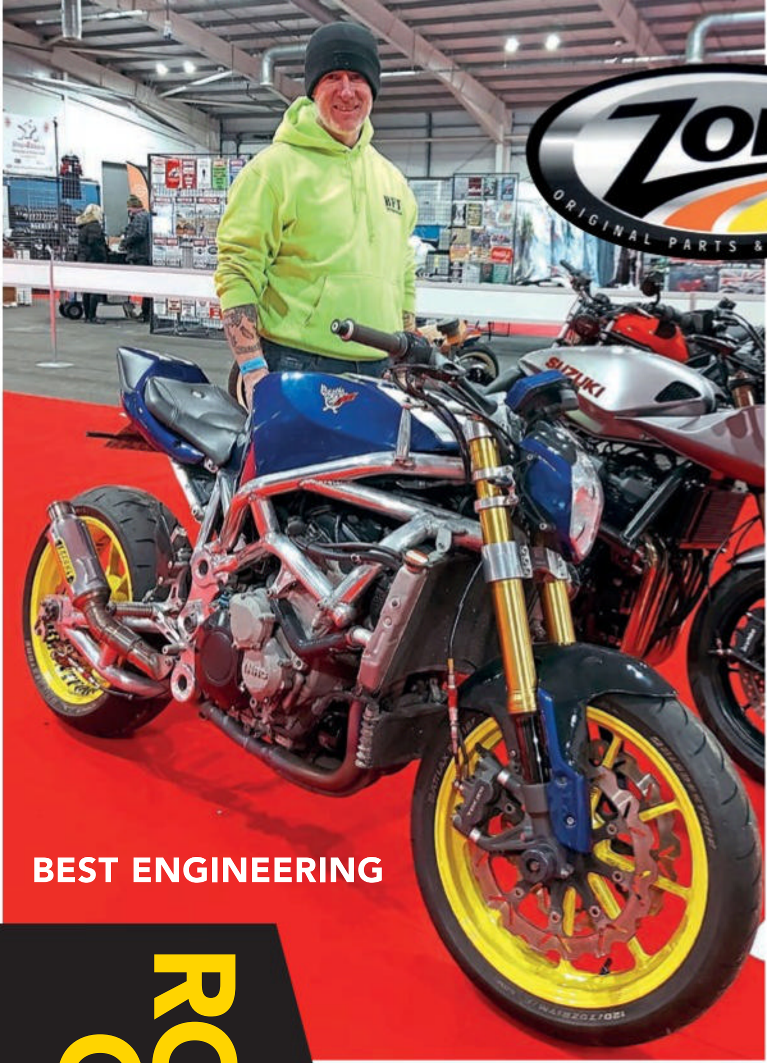
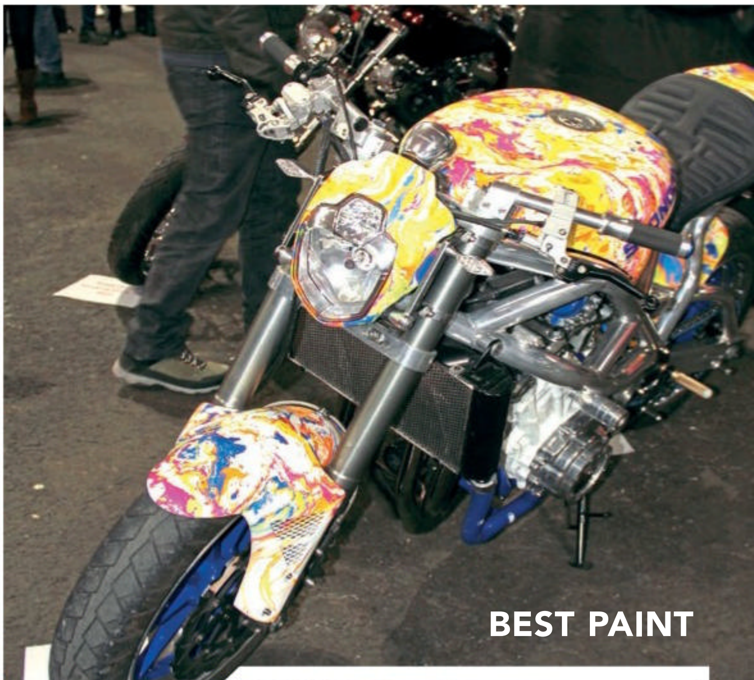
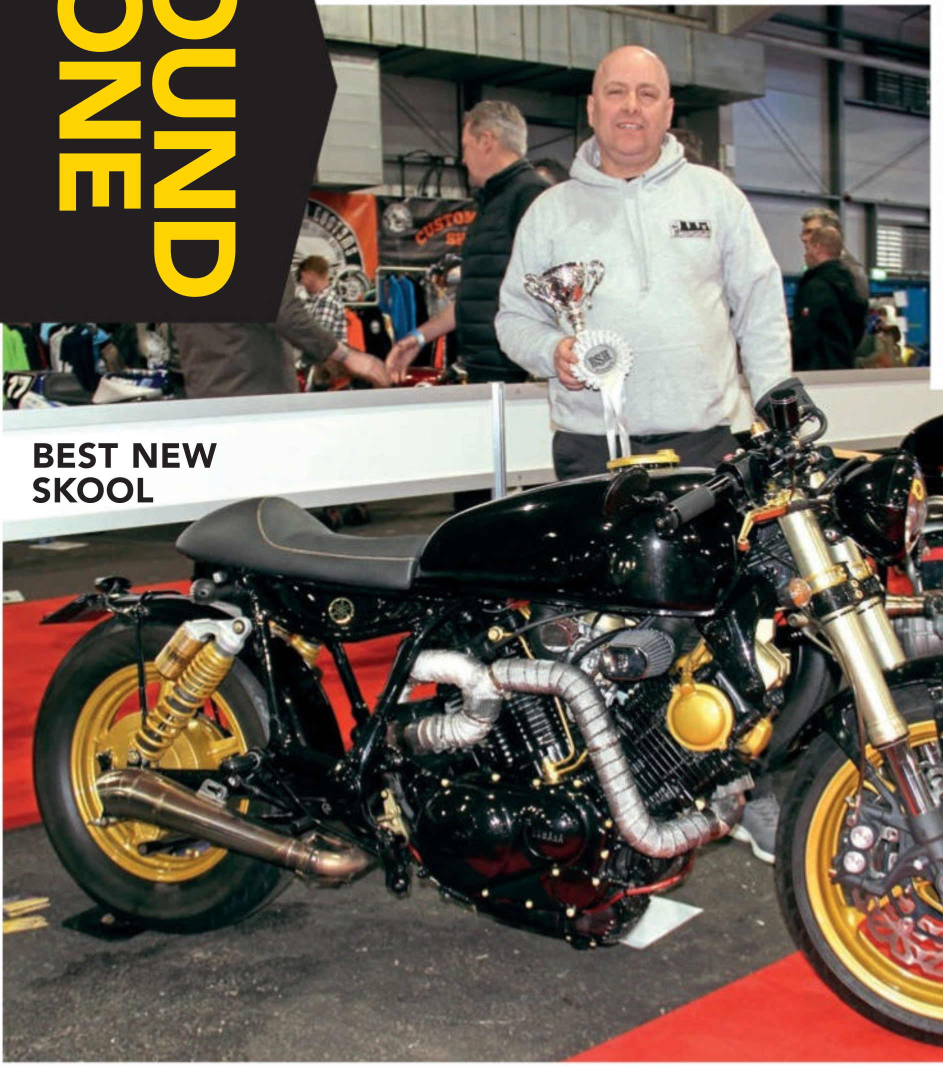
ROUND ONE

ROUND ONE


BEST ENGINEERING



BEST PAINT


BEST NEW SKOOL

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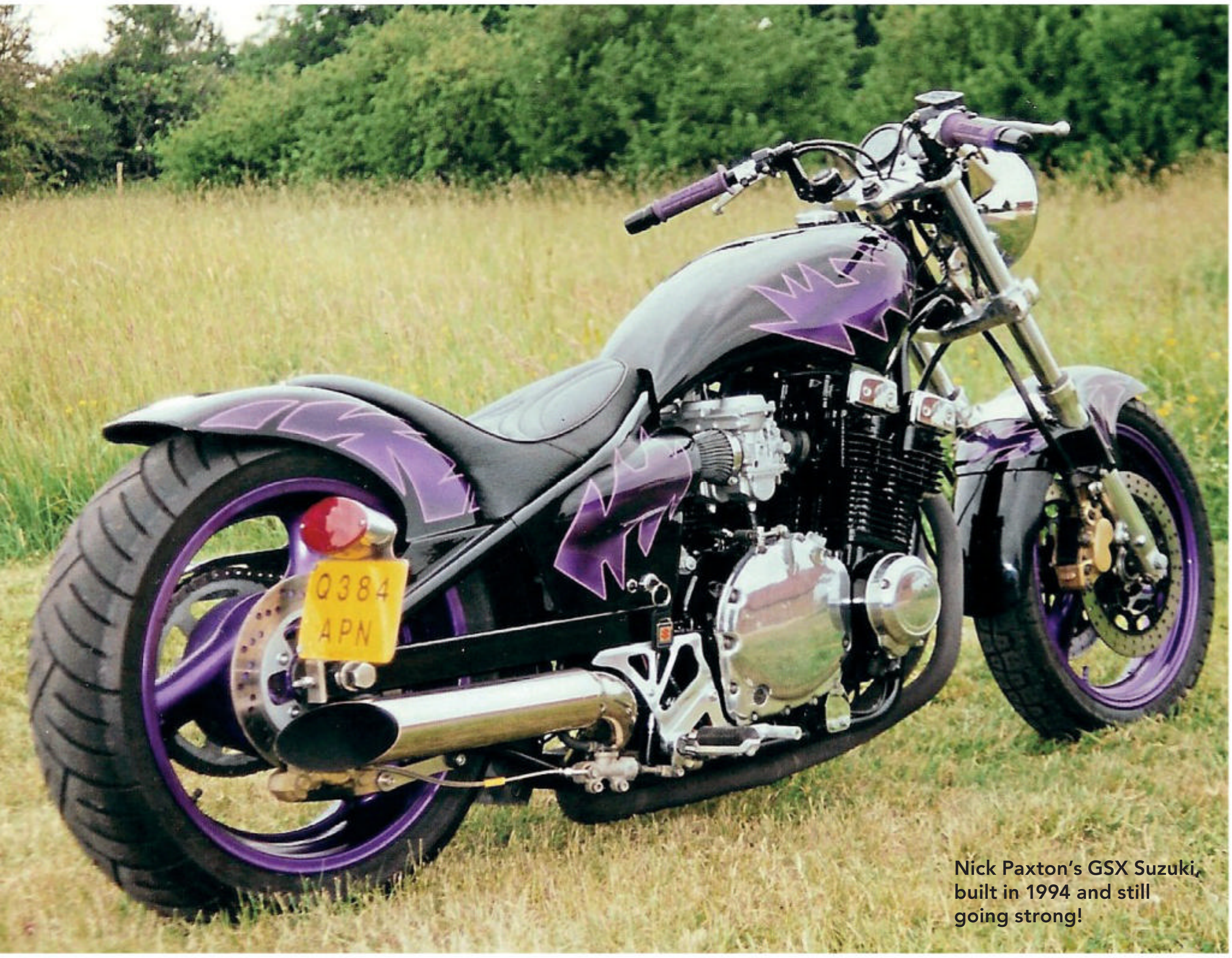
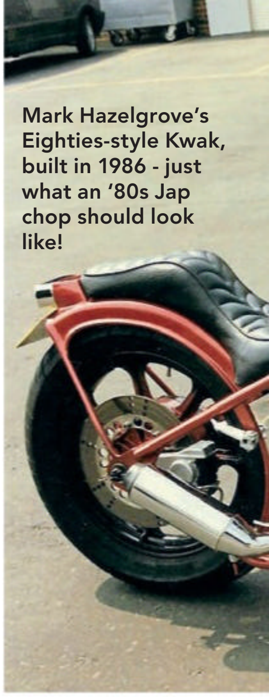


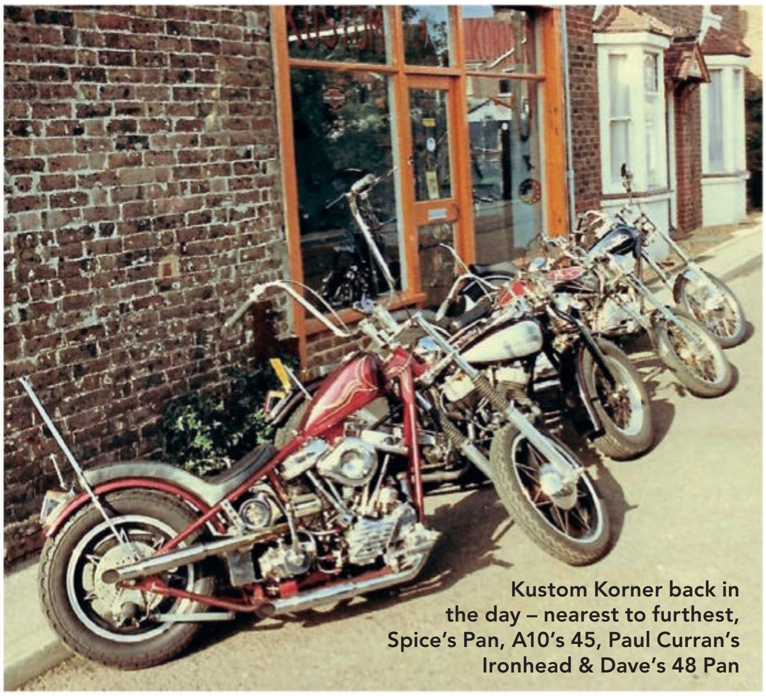
Nick Paxton's GSX Suzuki, built in 1994 and still going strong!



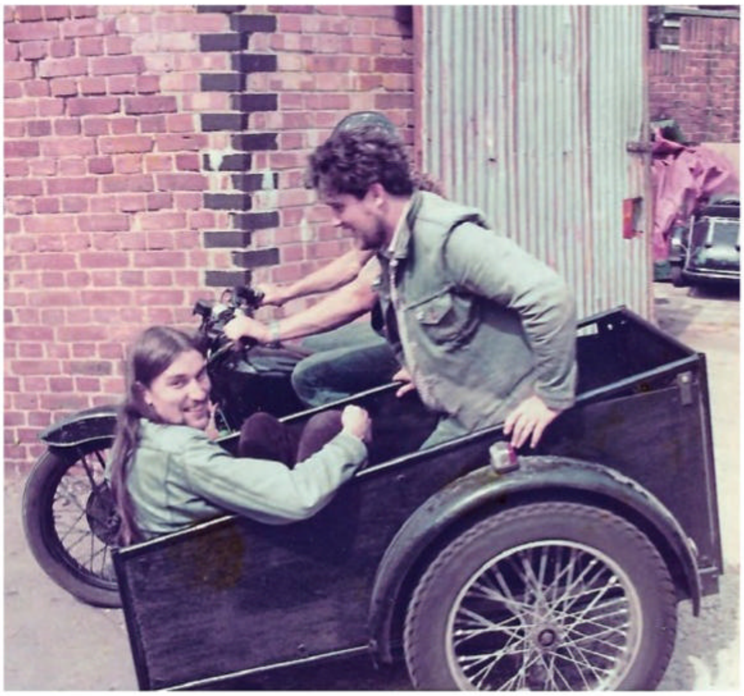
Mark Hazelgrove's Eighties-style Kwak, built in 1986 - just what an '80s Jap chop should look like!

A LIFE IN THE CUSTOM WORLD

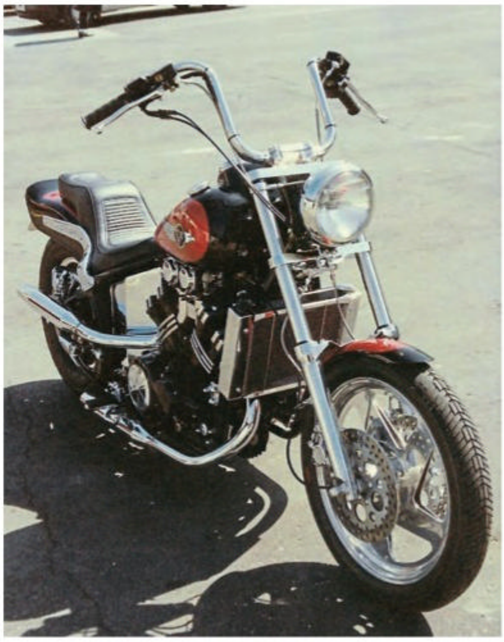
AS I SAID LAST ISSUE, MOST OF US IN THE CUSTOM WORLD, MESELF INCLUDED, HAVE REACHED A TIME IN OUR LIVES WHEN WE START TO LOOK BACK AT THE PAST WITH SOME FONDNESS – BACK AT WHAT WE DID IN OUR FORMATIVE YEARS, AT THE BIKES WE HAD, THE BIKES OUR MATES HAD, THE PEOPLE WE HUNG AROUND WITH, THE SH*T WE GOT UP TO…



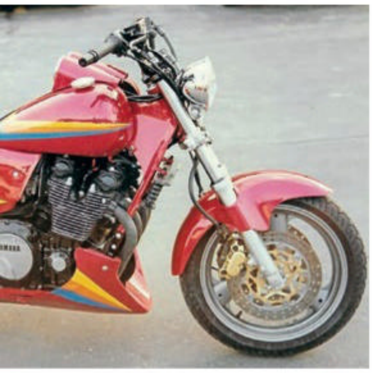
Kustom Korner back in the day – nearest to furthest, Spice's Pan, A10's 45, Paul Curran's Ironhead & Dave's 48 Pan



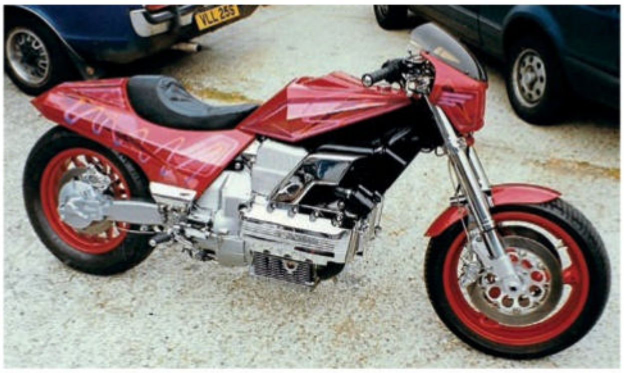
ABOVE: Pete, Compo & Spice on/in an A10 combo – love the simplicity of the 'chair!



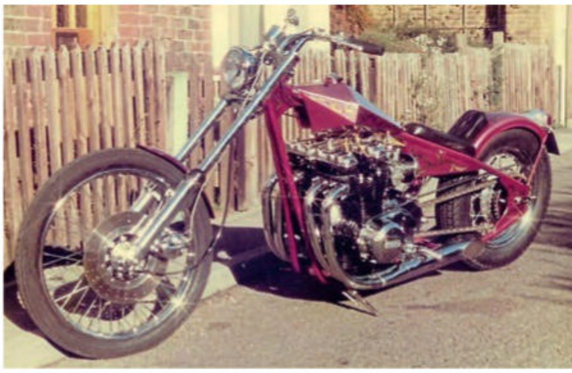
LEFT: Over the years Dave had a hand in a number of iconic John Potter bikes, most of which were featured in BSH; this is his 'factory custom' V-Max, the bike Yamaha should've built!



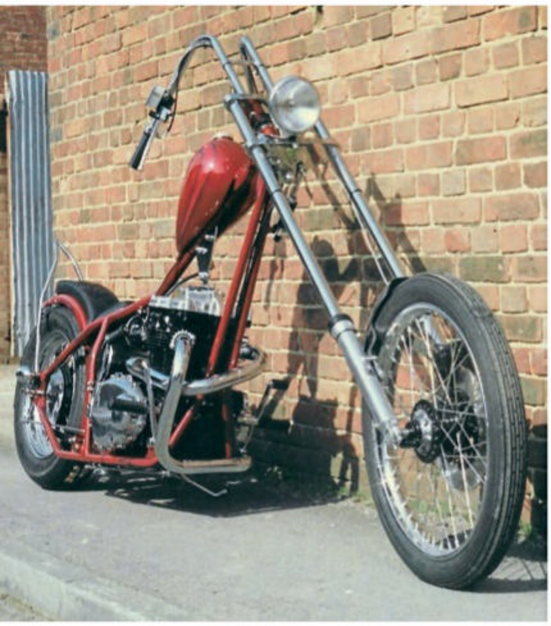
ABOVE: Richard's FJ – it wasn't only Revolution and the Notts and Leics lads who were building cool Yams in the '90s



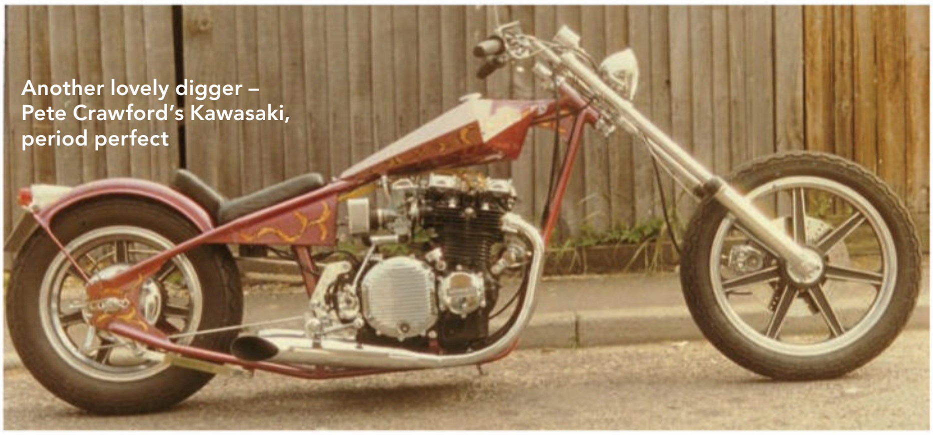
ABOVE: Another JP bike – this time the incredible angular BMW Brick



ABOVE: Pete Crawford's Honda digger back in the '80s – d'y'think Dave's got a thing about Honda diggers by any chance?

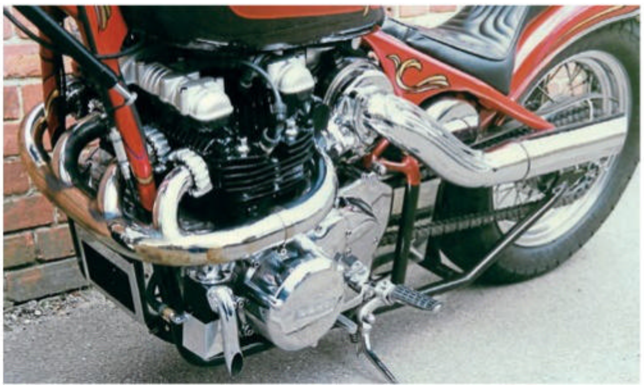


ABOVE: Gorgeous Swedish-style Kwak (I think) twin – yep, another JP bike!



Another lovely digger – Pete Crawford's Kawasaki, period perfect

BELOW: The first turbo-charged chopper most of us'd ever seen, another John Potter bike that Dave had a hand in



AS with most of these misty-eyed recollections, there's a serious case of our rose-tinted spectacles needing a damn good cleaning – the past wasn't, perhaps, quite as idyllic as we remember it but, no matter, it's always good to look back to those heady days of youth.

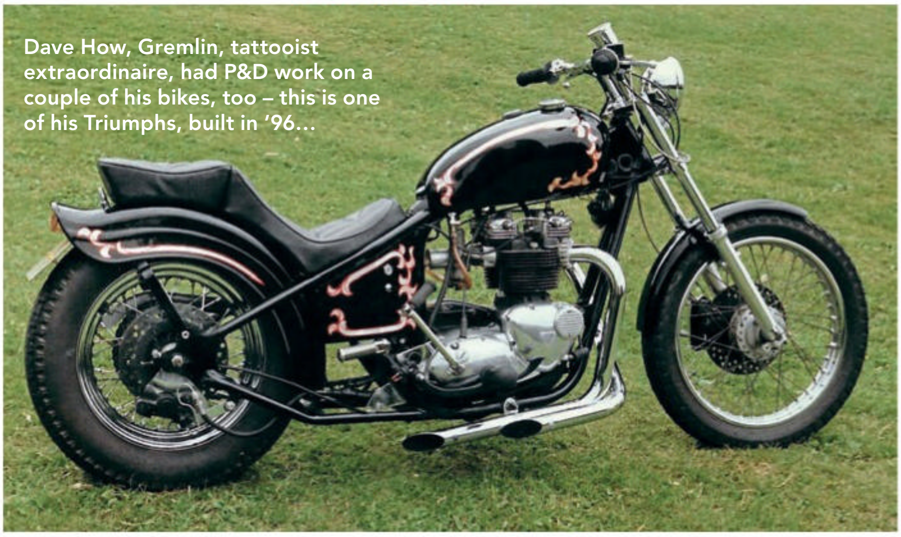
Dave Batcherlar, the D of P&D Customs in Slinfold in Sussex, has been living the life perhaps longer than a fair few of us, and I was privileged to be allowed a good shufti through his own personal photo collection not that long ago, and I thought it might be a cool thing to show you some of the bikes he, and his oppos in both Kustom Korner (which preceded P&D) and P&D, have had a hand in. It was a real eye-opener for me (and, I suspect, you, too) when you see just how many of the bikes featured in BSH back in the day, and in a million slightly out-of-focus photos in people's albums around the country too, passed through the Sussex workshops – so many, in fact, that even with some fairly ruthless editing, we're still going to have to run this over two issues!

Enjoy – I did!

NIK

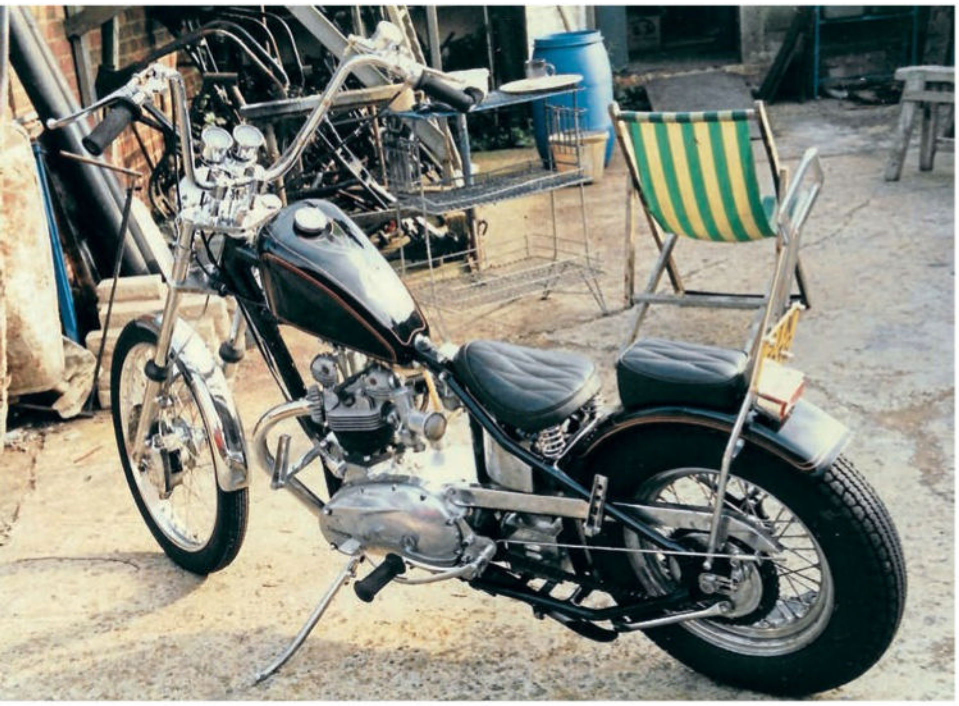
A LIFE IN THE CUSTOM WORLD PART 2

RIGHT: Dave in Holland in '84, drunk apparently… great pic!

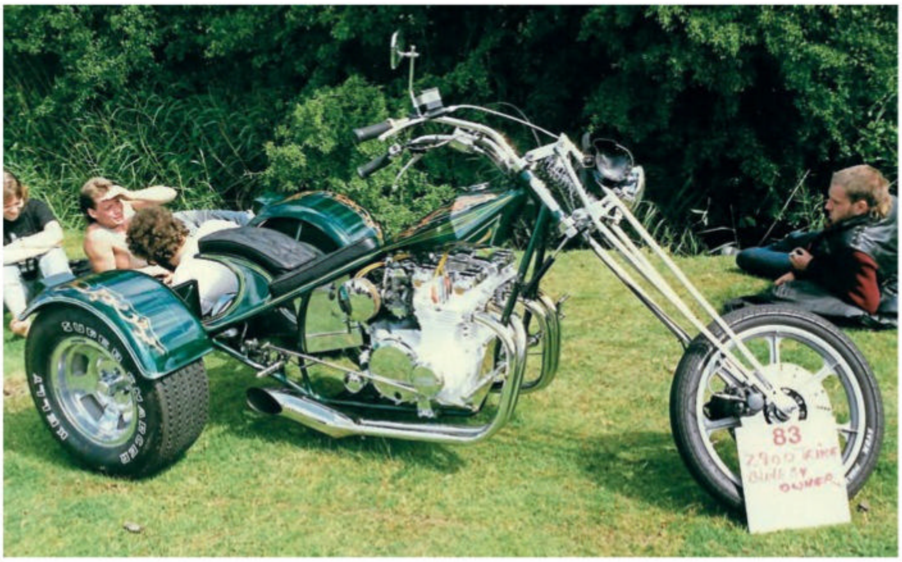


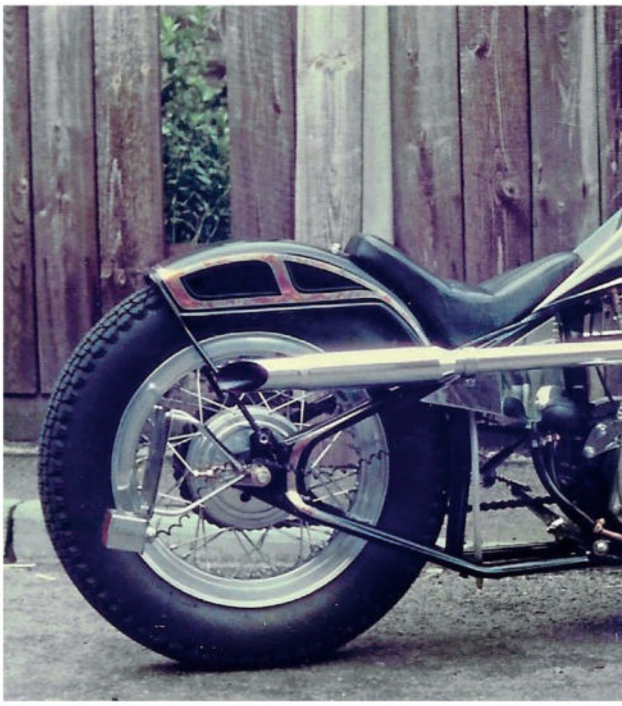
Dave How, Gremlin, tattooist extraordinaire, had P&D work on a couple of his bikes, too – this is one of his Triumphs, built in '96…

BELOW: …and this one was built ten years earlier in '86!



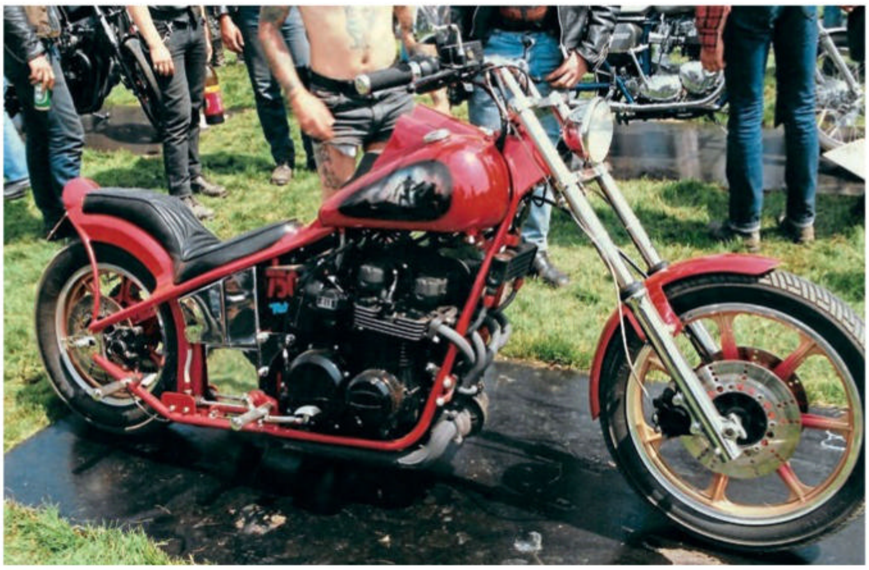
BELOW: Keith Baker's Z900 trike at Kent – Dave did the seats

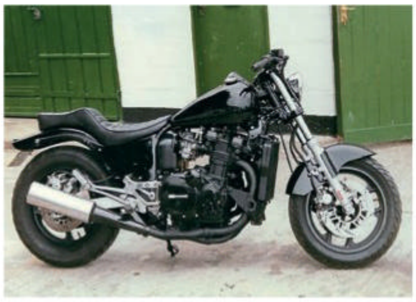


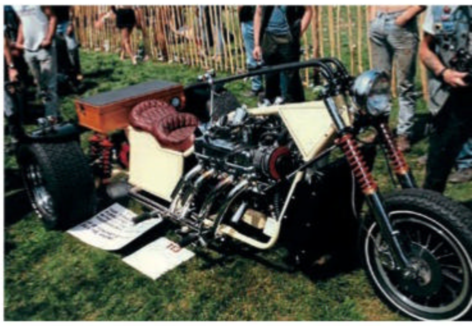


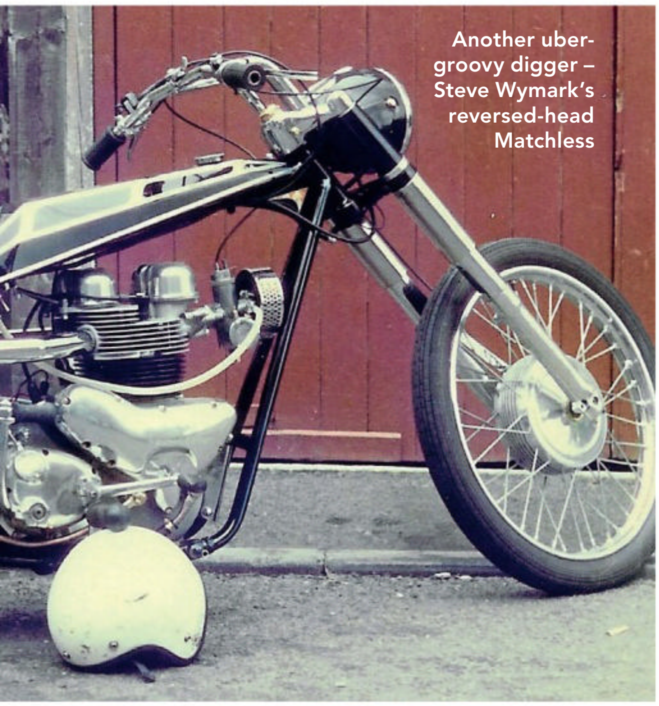
BELOW: Another iconic chop – 'The Terminator' GPZ750 turbo

RIGHT: Very tough black Kwak built for one of the Road Rats in '94

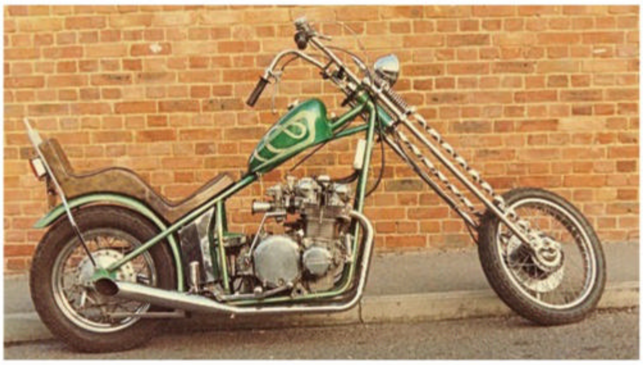






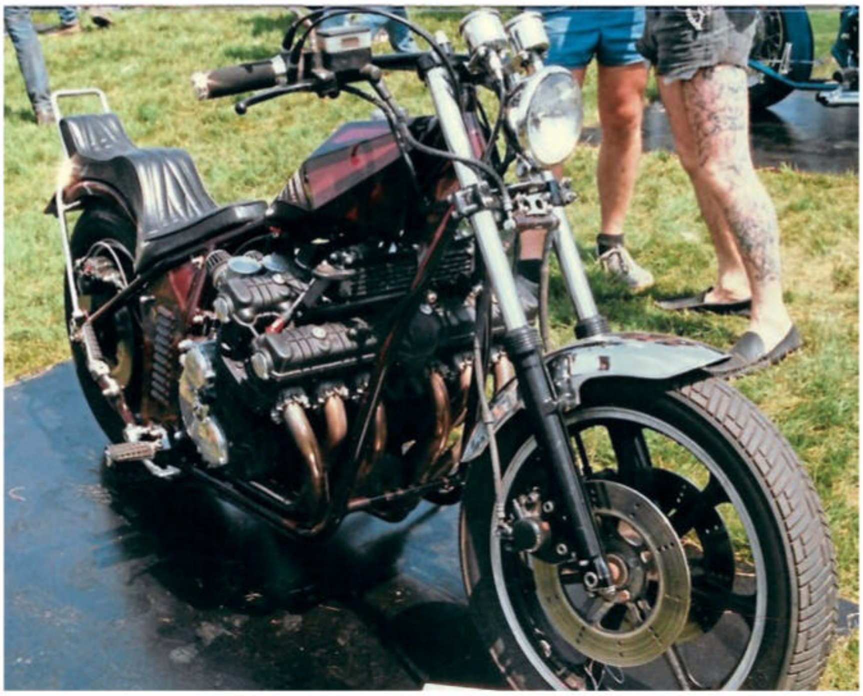


Another uber-groovy digger – Steve Wymark's reversed-head Matchless



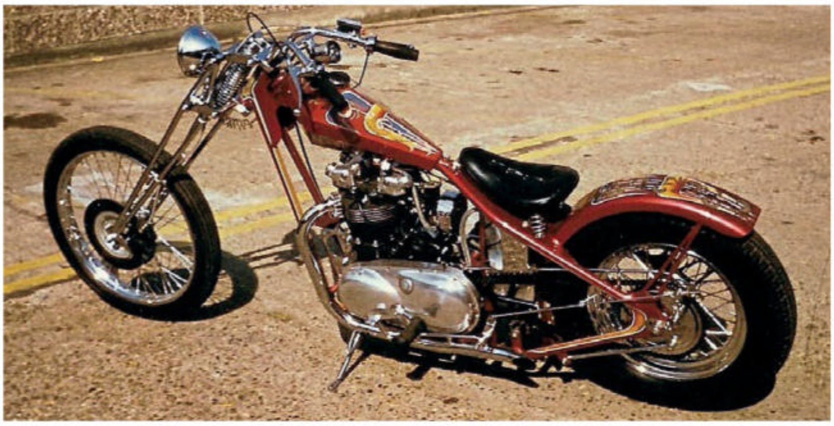
ABOVE Gary Morris' V8 trike at Kent in the '80s – Dave did the seats on this one, too

LEFT: Spice's long-fork Kwak chop with twisted leg springers



LEFT: Funky (man) purple '80s Triumph with 22-inch-over over springers

BELOW: Mick Perry's Triumph with its coffin tank & its girders



ABOVE: The Crowman (Steve Crow to his mum) had P&D do his CBX chop back in the early '90s

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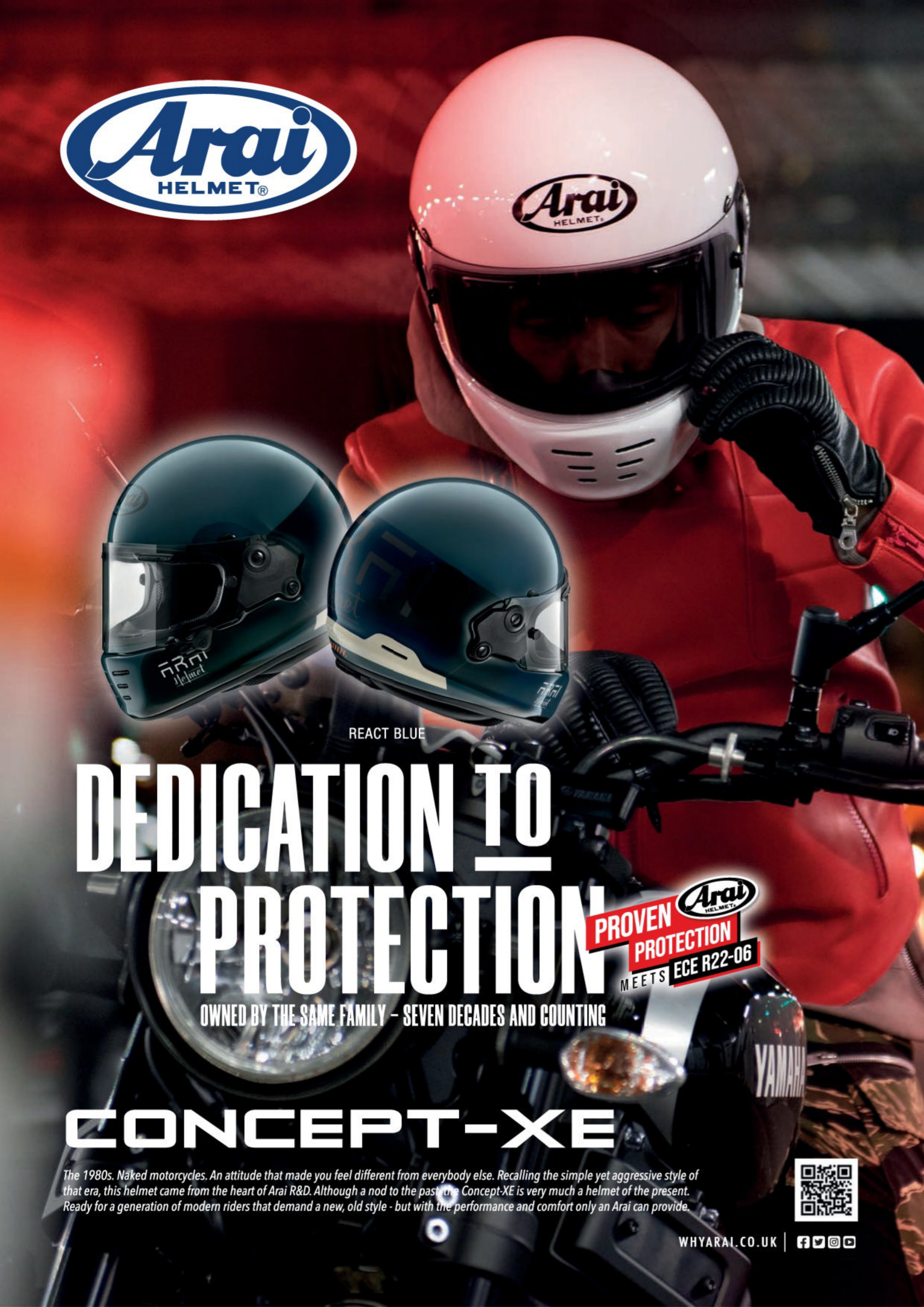
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REAL WORLD ROADTEST

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DATE

Upon turning the ignition, and letting the TFT (thin-film-transistor – a more refined, full-colour version of a conventional liquid crystal display, LCD, screen) dash run through its start-up sequence, you press the 'start' button, and the 998cc, FireBlade-derived, engine bursts into life with a pretty damn raucous roar that I found myself having to shout over to talk to the guy from Honda who'd delivered it. This, I kid you not, while perfectly normal to us lot who run, shall we say, perhaps not perfectly legal exhausts, is definitely not normal in the new bike world where most modern bikes make about as much noise as a kitten farting in a warehouse, and immediately put a smile on me face – this bike sounds like a bike!*

The CB1000R is part of Honda's Neo Sport Café range – a slightly different take on a genre that's wont to be called, by proper journalists, 'super-nakeds' (basically, the latest sports bikes converted into naked street bikes). Rather than just take the fairing off, and readjust the power for more road-friendly characteristics, Honda' has looked back in time and taken inspiration from the CBs that challenged the British brands in the 1960s and '70s, and added a bunch of modern styling twists. The CB1000R has, as I said above, a motor based on the legendarily rapid CBR1000RR FireBlade, which makes 143bhp and 76.7lb-ft of torque, but has high(ish) 'bars (compared to its plastic-clad progenitor),

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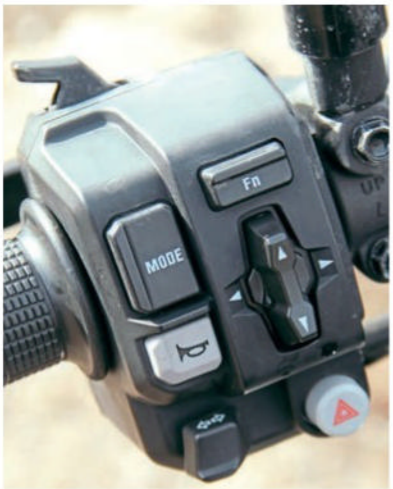
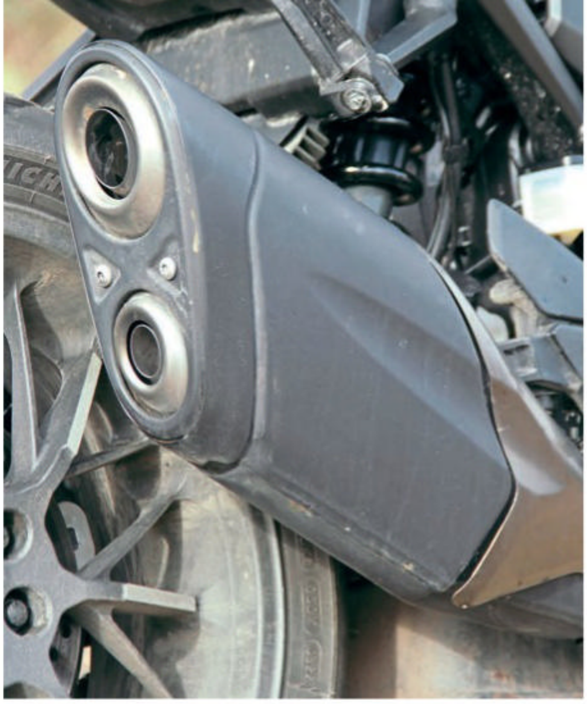
*Apparently, at a recent track event, a brand-new and completely stock 'Blade failed the strict noise limits and, get this, they had to put an aftermarket, quieter, can on it before it was allowed out on to the circuit!





a different frame with new subframe and larger seats, a huge twin-outlet exhaust, and wheels that look like they're from some high-end bling catalogue. It doesn't feel plastic; it feels solid, most definitely made from metal, and, in this very understated and subtle Black Edition, isn't as lairy in its colour schemes as a Scouser's shellsuit. It's a tough-looking bike with more than a bit of attitude.

It rides well, too; there's an up-and-down quick-shifter (completely wasted on me, I never remember it's there) which means the light clutch lever's redundant once you're moving, and ample torque low down – around town it's grunty and nimble, and you can flick almost contemptuously through traffic, and out of town its absolutely sings. There are three engine modes (Rain, Standard and Sport), and in Sport the traction control really has to work hard in the first few gears to limit the front wheel lifting as the gearing's quite short, and you can feel the front end go light if you nail it. It'll cruise happily at speeds that'll mean just about every car on the motorway's in your way, but there i'nt much in the way of wind-protection so higher speed cruising (as in over hahumphymumph mph) is a bit painful if the wind's in the wrong direction. The seat's more comfortable than it looks, too, and the pillion's large enough that those with a real-world bum won't feel they're going through an involuntary colonoscopy, and the suspension, Showa all round, is pretty damn plush, too.

Fuel consumption? Umm, yeah, this is where me and Honda, and other journo types, disagree. Honda says the bike has a 16.2-litre (3.5 gallon) tank, and quotes figures of just below 50mpg, giving a theoretical range of (works out on fingers) about 175 miles. Now I know I'm a little paranoid about Honda fuel gauges (they're usually quite small, and don't have a fuel light), and so I tend to fill up as soon as the level's down to the last lil' bar, but I don't think I ever got more than £16 in fill-up to fill-up, and that feels like quite a small tank to me. Yeah, I know I could've probably gone further per tank than I did, but I really don't like being that dick who's run out of petrol and has to push their bike along the side of the road, or ring someone to bring a fuel can, y'know? Similarly, respectable road-testers say they got figures of low-to-mid 40s mpg. I, umm, didn't – I was getting low-to-mid 30s, slightly higher on longer dual-carriageways, and that means, for me, tank range was about 100-110 miles. That doesn't worry me overly as, on a run, 100 miles is generally two hours, and I usually want to get off a bike for a bit after I've been riding it for two hours. You also have to remember this thing makes nearly 150bhp – it's not a commuter bike, is it?

Anyway, having had the Suzuki equivalent, the GSX-S 1000, as a long-termer last year, two things about the Honda are instantly comparable: the seat height is higher (830mm as opposed to 810), and it feels lighter, although it actually isn't (212kg versus 209) – the CB was a lot easier to move around with the engine off; pushing it backwards out of the TARDIS I keep stuff in (yes, I am a nerd, you know that) was a lot easier, and it felt lighter to pick up off the stand. The seat height did have me on tippy-toes (poor Pam couldn't ride it at all, and she was gutted as she really liked the look of it), and did make me a little wary turning it round in the rough-arse gravel car park at home but, then again, I'm not the tallest person in the world, y'know? Once it was moving, though, that feeling just disappears, and it's lovely to ride. It also feels faster, slightly smoother, and marginally more nimble than the Suzook, too, and it's also way louder an' all… did I mention that?

NIK

THE HONDA CB1000R BLACK EDITION COSTS FROM £13,299, AND YOU CAN GET MORE INFO FROM YOUR LOCAL HONDA DEALER OR FROM **WWW.HONDA.CO.UK**

PROJECT

BUILD IT YERSEL'

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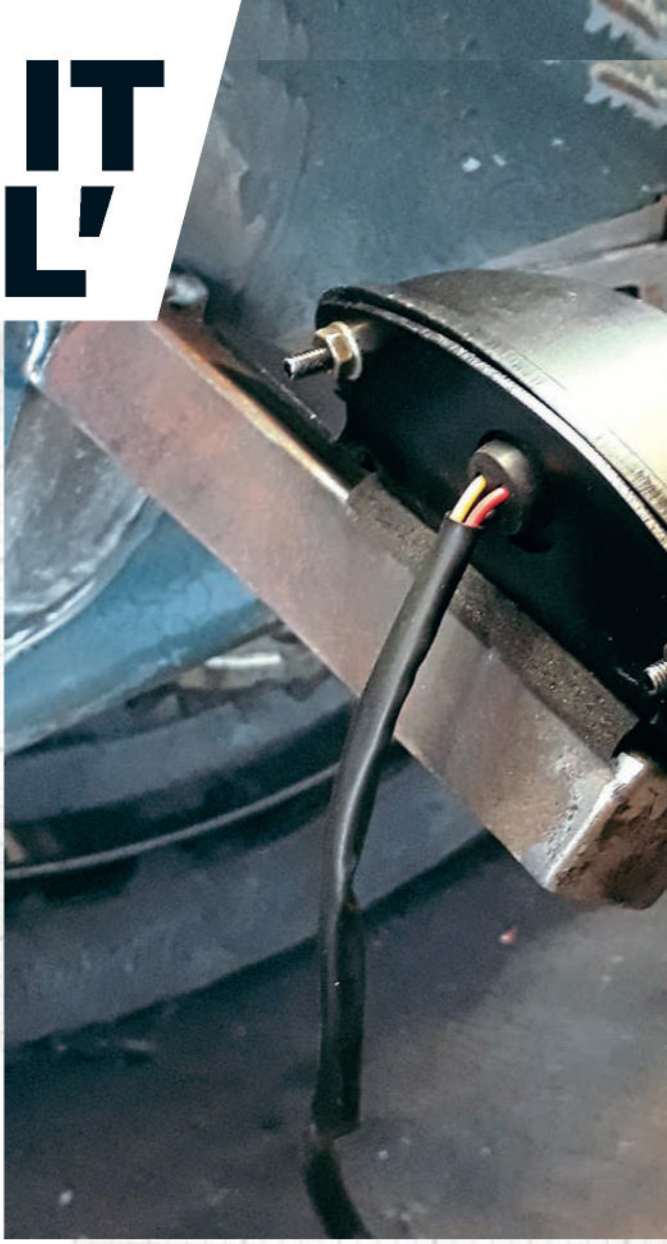

PART FIVE

WE'RE GETTING THERE; ELECTRICS AND FETTLING'RE WHERE WE'RE UP TO WITH THE PROJECT BUILD.

With Japanese bike electrics, things used to be more simple. My old (1978) CB750 has an AC generator to make the electricity; a regulator/rectifier (reg/rec) to convert it to useable DC and control the output; somewhere to store the power (a battery); contact breakers, or points (which interrupt the current flowing in the primary winding of the ignition coil, inducing a high voltage at the coil output for a short period, enough to arc across the electrodes of a spark plug); and a few switches to turn on lights and make the horn go beep. There are three separate circuits, basically, in a loom: an ignition circuit to make the bike go vroom, a charging circuit to keep it going vroom, and a lighting circuit so that you can see where you're going (amongst other things) when it's going vroom in the dark, and I like to break it down like that in my mind to help me make sense of it.

Things, though, get more complicated the more modern the bike. There're switches on the clutch and side-stand that cut the ignition if they're not pulled in/up, fuel pumps, fuel-injection systems, plus relays to run these things (a relay, if you like, is basically a small switch operating another larger switch – a trickle of power opens the switch to allow a larger flow of power to

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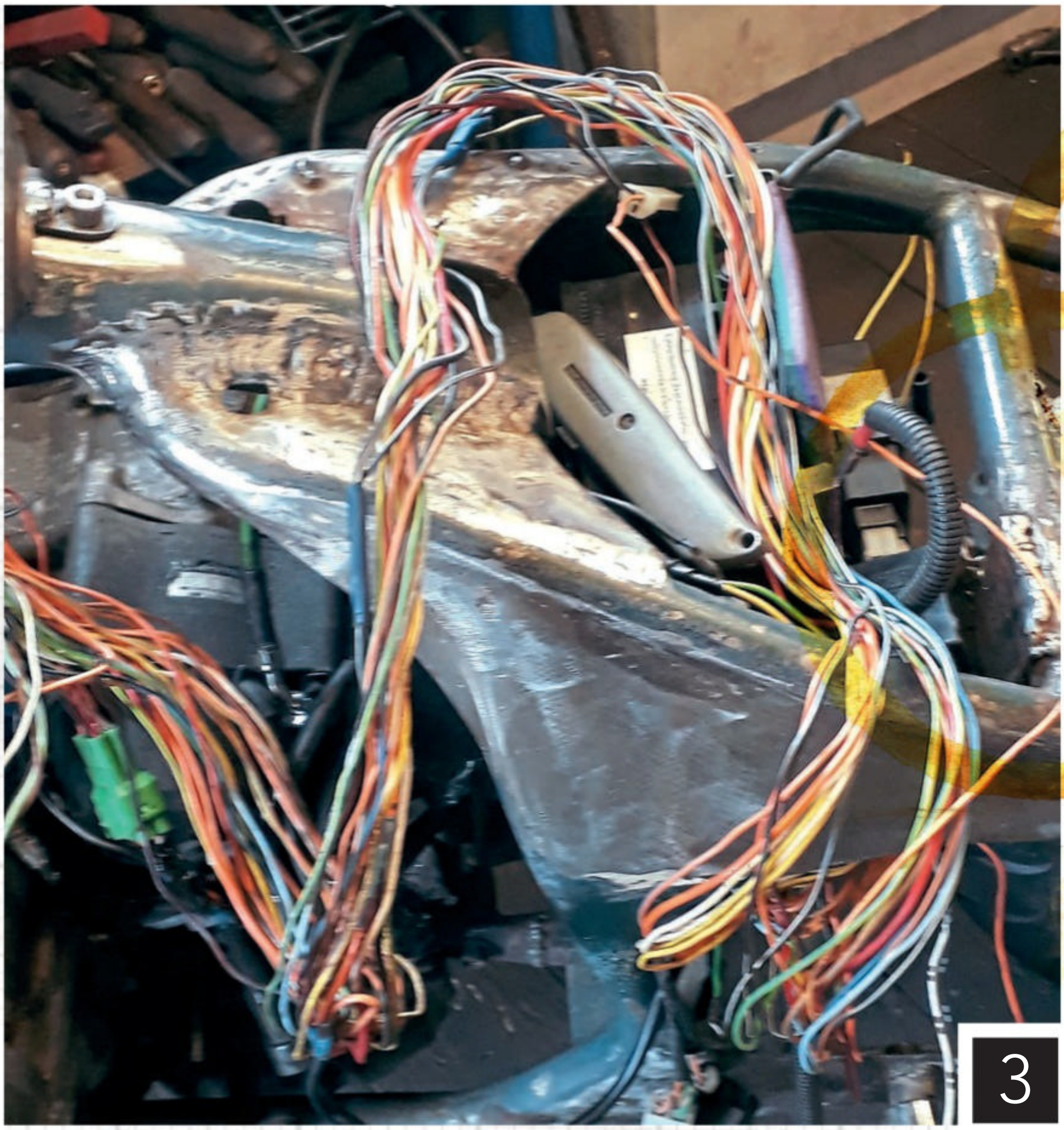

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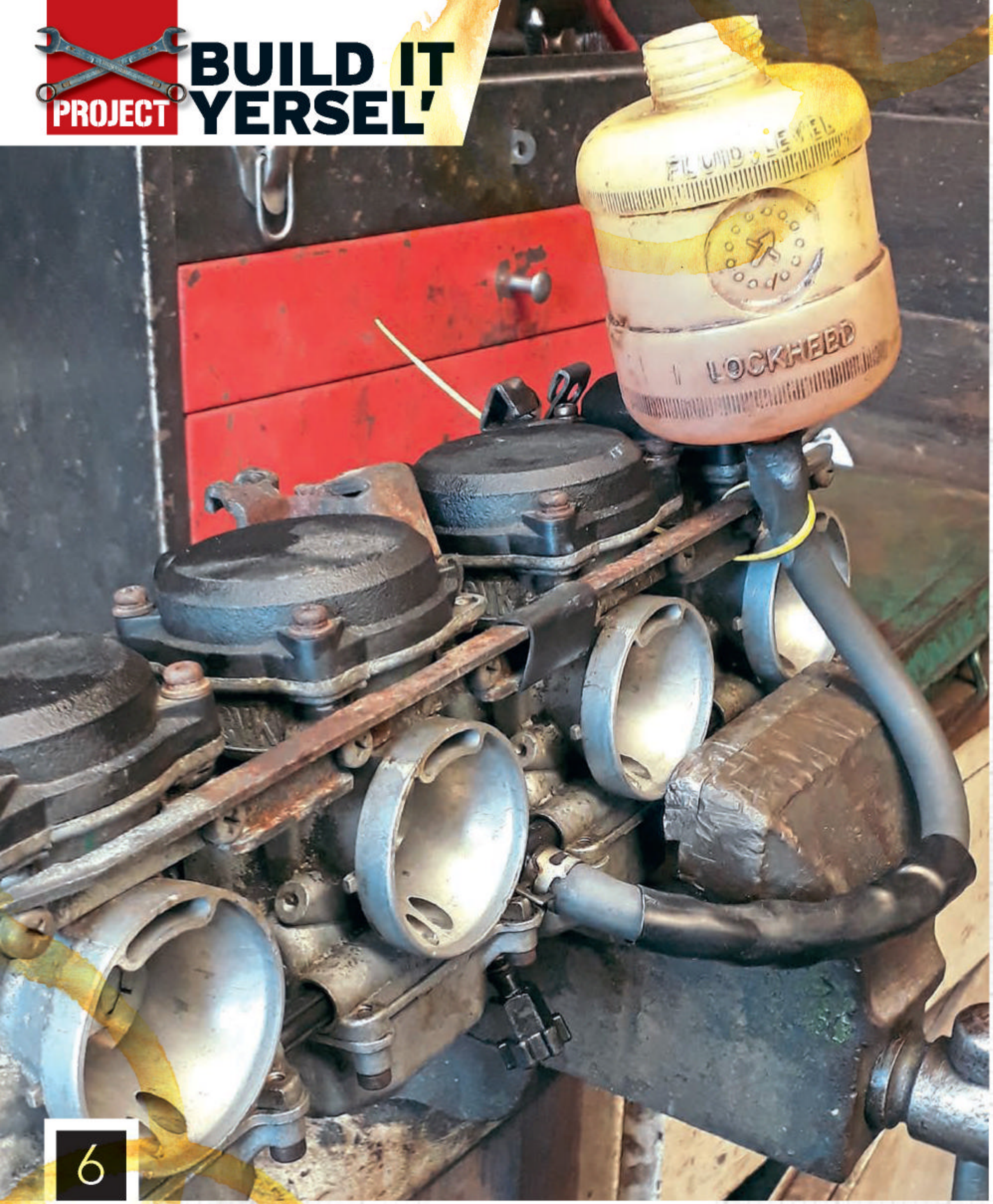
ELECTROLYTE FILLED
NON-SPILLABLE
12.6Ah (20
12V 12Ah (10HR)
YTX14
CHARGING METHOD
1415
OFF
rolson
27259

pass through, or to pulse like an indicator relay). Thankfully our Bandit's not too complicated; power's provided by alternator (rather than a generator) on top of the engine (a bit like a car) which has the rec/reg in it, simplifying things, and, thankfully, carbs and no fuel pump. The clutch and side-stand switches can be removed, and the two wires that go to said items joined together to complete a circuit (if you don't do this your ignition won't work).

The headlight on the chop was sourced for me by Nik and is a Yamaha MT03 one (pic 1), while the rear's a generic LED bought from an online auction site, as were the indicators (yes, this chop's having indicators – strictly speaking, anything after 1986 should have indicators, but there are various MoT loopholes; best advice is make friends with your MoT man!). The headlight, helpfully, has four mounting points so I made up some alloy brackets for the top, bolted to the top yoke, and for the lower ones I used threaded rod welded to the bottom yoke with a plate with a hole in to attach to the light. The rear was simple to mount, too, using a piece of half-inch angle-iron welded to the frame, with holes drilled in it for the light's bolts to go through (pic 2).

The wiring itself can be challenging, but stick with it and you'll suss it. There are two ways people like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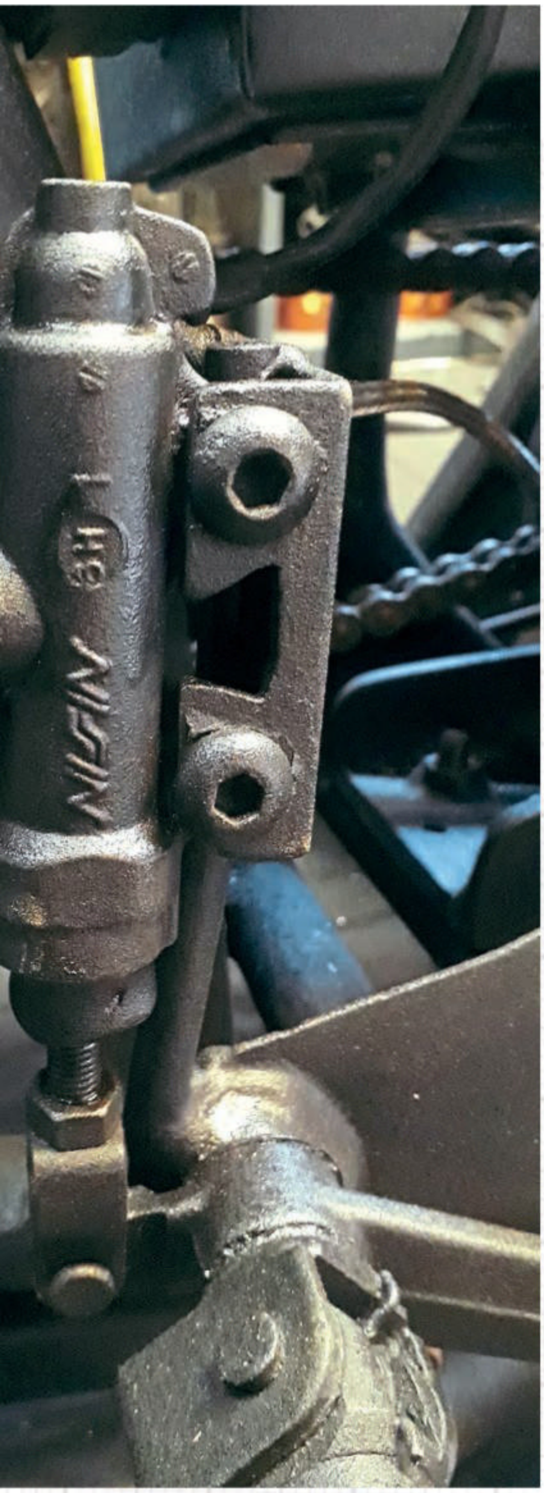
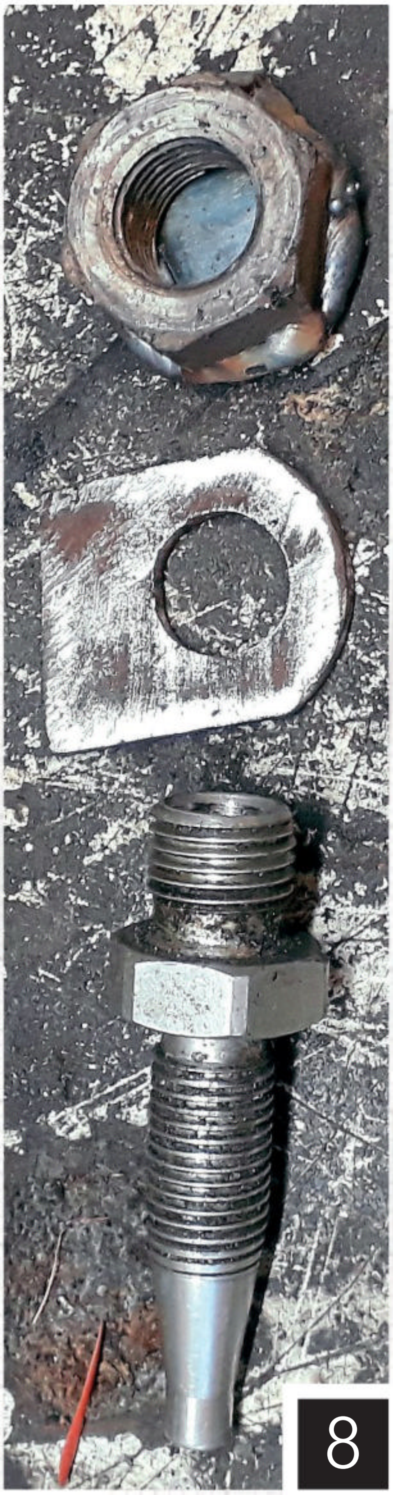
to do wiring: either starting from scratch and making their own loom, or adapting a stock loom. We (okay, I) have the original loom here which, of course, isn't going to fit nicely as none of the major components, apart from the headlight, are anywhere near where Mr Suzuki and his minions'd put them. I've already mounted the major components, as detailed in previous issues, and so I unwrapped the loom, laid it out, and worked out where things needed to go (pic 3). A lot of the wires simply needed shortening, or making longer, but that does mean you're going to have to cut wires. To reconnect them I always solder them and use shrink wrap (pic 4) to insulate them, but I had a mate who built a Triumph chop years ago with all the wires just twisted together, and then wrapped in insulation tape, and it worked but… Anyway, soldering irons aren't expensive, and I use both an electric one and a small gas one for doing trickier spots. I'd also recommend getting a cheap multi-meter (pic 5) as they're very useful – I, like a lot of people, have no idea what most of it does (even though my mates Jim and Mick've explained it to me a million times) but, for most wiring jobs, you really only need the 12-volt range to tell if there's power, and the continuity setting so you know that wires're connected and making a circuit as that's where a lot, if not most, of the problems come from.

Indicators: a word of warning – if you're using LED indicators, you'll most likely need to change the flasher relay to an LED-compatible one because just using a stock bulb indicator relay'll mean they either won't work, or'll flash at a ridiculously fast rate (which is an MoT failure).

With the electrical items on, and connected together in such a way that they all work as intended, the next job on this bike was a final fettle of the carbs. Before I fit them, especially on a freshly-painted engine, I like to put them in the vice, attach a dummy (remote) tank, and fill them with fuel to make sure they don't leak (pic 6) as, having painted the engine, the last thing you want is fuel peeing out. I know I've previously mentioned cleaning them out before, but they're fickle things, and it's





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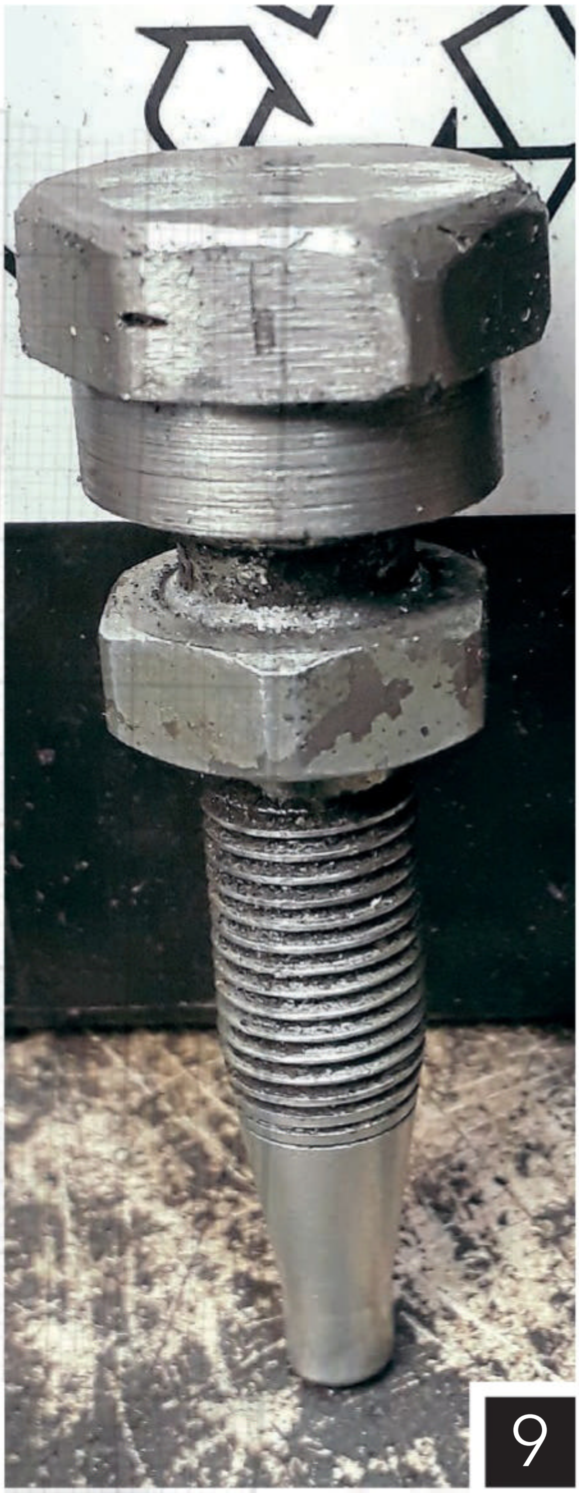

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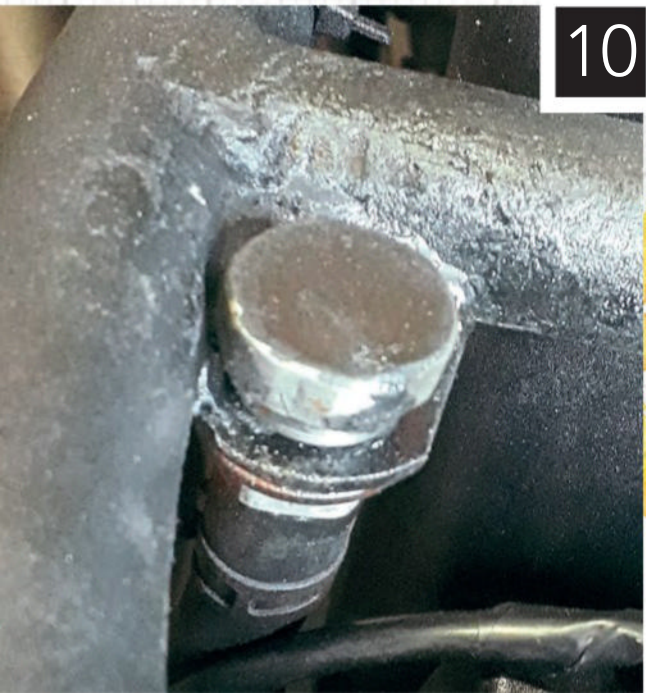

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worth a second check, y'know? These ones, it has to be said, fought me all the way, needing endless tinkering, and a rebuild kit, and I think I'm still slightly traumatised by them.

Last job this time was bleeding the brakes. It's a very straightforward process (usually…) that I'm sure you're familiar with but, again, watch your paint. It was at this point I discovered the rear master-cylinder (pic 7) was knackered and wouldn't bleed up (which's odd as it was fine when on the donor bike) but, thankfully, I had one from an RF900 which fitted. That done, I realised I needed some sort of reservoir for it and, not wanting an off-the-shelf one, made one from an hydraulic fitting and a nut (pic 8), which I welded on as a cap, and turned that down to look half decent (pic 9). I used a bench-grinder to do this, but you could do something similar with a vice and the angle-grinder you bought after reading article one, and fitted it under the seat (pic 10).

Then, after putting everything together as it should be, taking a deep breath, and hoping, I hit the starter button and… it started! Hooray – MoT time.

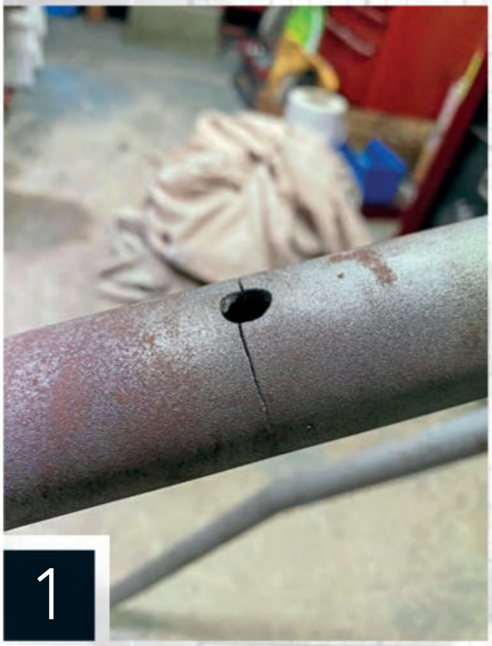
AGI

NEXT ISSUE: THE FINISHED BIKE!

TECH

MR BRIDGES' VOL. VI, PART V MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

IN THE LAST EPISODE OF THIS, I USED A PICTURE WITH THE TANK BALANCED ON THE FRAME. THIS'S VERY STUPID AS THE TANK'LL FALL OFF AND, INEVITABLY, ACQUIRE A HUMUNGOUS DENT, WHICH'S WHY I USED DUCT TAPE AROUND THE TOP TUBE AND THE MOUNTING TAB ON THE TANK TO PROVIDE A LITTLE EXTRA SECURITY.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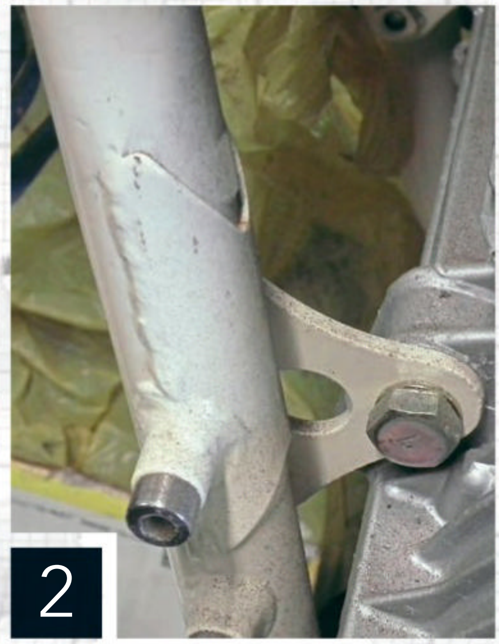
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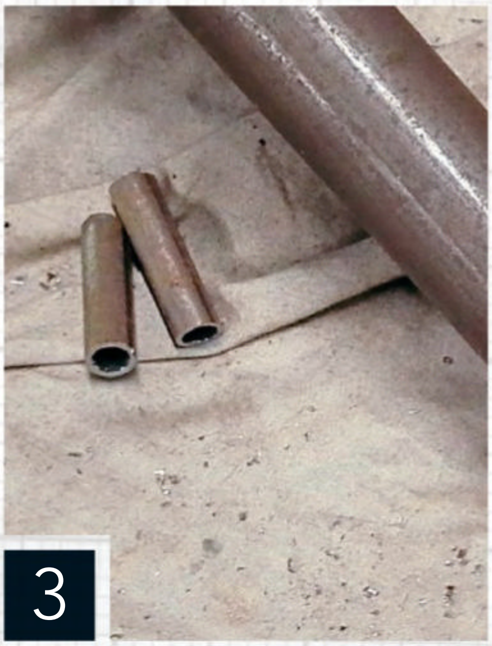
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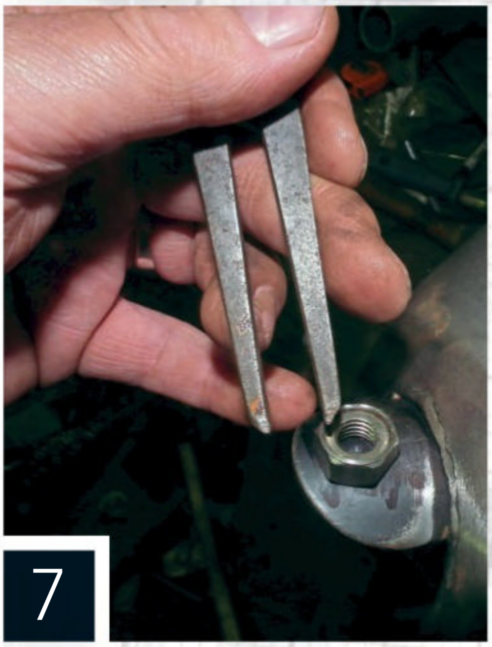
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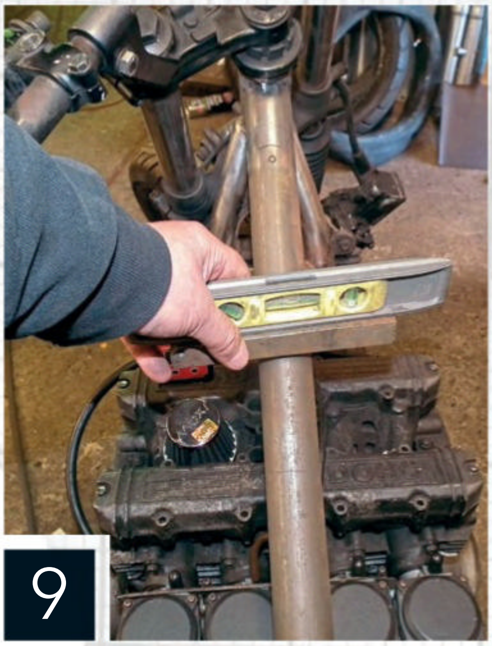
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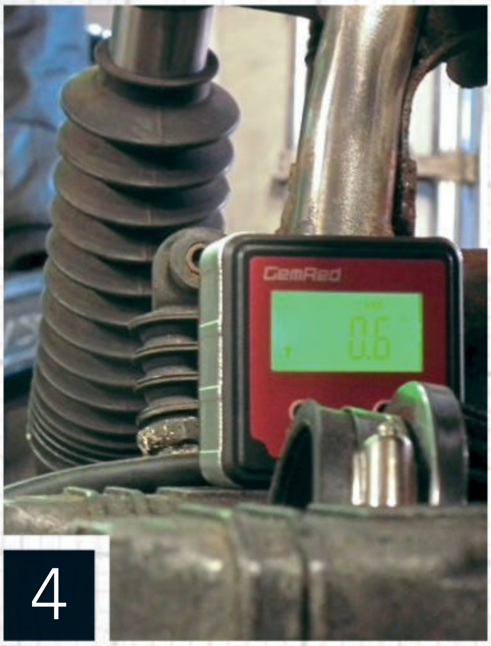
However, I'm not convinced on the reliability of duct tape as a mounting technique for fuel tanks, so something a little more reliable's called for. There're all sorts of ways of mounting them; you can even weld them to the frame, which used to be fairly popular in the '70s when everything was moulded. Hidden mounts are something that came along later. I've seen kits, and it's not hard to make the parts if you have a lathe.

To avoid unnecessary complication, I decided to use the original mounting tabs that came attached to the tank, and drill a couple of holes through the top tube for the mounting bolts – easy enough, right? Well, not really; the tank mounts are undrilled, you need the tank to sit level, and just drilling holes through the tube can have consequences down the line (Fig.1). Aside from the cracking thing, tightening bolts that're in holes drilled straight through a tube tends to crush the tube out of shape, and substantially weakens it. The simplest way to deal with this is to use a crush tube, which's a tube that passes through the hole and's welded at both ends – something you frequently see done on factory frames for engine mounts (Fig.2). Last time I mentioned keeping some 5/8-inch OD 12-gauge tube about the place to make crush tubes out of, but that makes sleeves for 10mm bolts, and 10mm's a bit excessive for mounting a tank. I also keep some half-inch OD 14-gauge tube about the place as that'll accept an 8mm bolt, so it makes useful crush tubes, too, and cutting off a couple of two-inch, or 50mm, pieces sorted the crush tubes (Fig.3). Having the ends square's fairly important so, if you're cutting them by hand, you can either file them square, or mount the tube in the chuck of a pillar drill and face it off against a piece of emery cloth.

Armed with some crush tubes, a fuel tank, and a top tube, I just needed to put some holes in the right places. Getting the holes in the right places, though, is the key to not having everything look like it might be slightly drunk. From mounting the tank with a piece of duct tape, I'd established where it could live, and still clear the handlebars, so I made some pen marks for that. Getting the tank to sit level left to right on the frame really depends on having the frame level, so I sat it on the centre-stand and put a level on the cam cover (Fig.4), then shimmed under the stand to level it up. Next, I needed to put some holes in the mounts on the tank. Rather than trying to measure this, I use a pair of equal leg calipers, basically like the dividers from a school geometry set (Fig.5). Most people can guess the middle of something around the size of the tank mounts within something like ten per cent so, by setting the dividers by eye, and scribing a line on the mount from each side'll leave two parallel lines with a small gap between them (if there's only one line, congratulations – you guessed right). At this point adjusting the calipers to your best guess at the middle of those two lines, and repeating the process, will've usually nailed it (Fig.6). With a little practice, this tends to be more accurate than actually measuring things with a ruler.

Finding the distance from the end for the hole was done using a suitable nut (Fig.7) as since the front of the tank slopes over the mount, putting the hole in the centre of the tab would've meant getting a tool in there was, at best, tricky. For much the same reason I ended remarking the front tab, and drilling from underneath the tank (Fig.8). All of this, of course, assumes the guy in the Chinese tank factory welded the tabs on at least close to the middle of the tunnel – he certainly could've left more sticking out on the front one on



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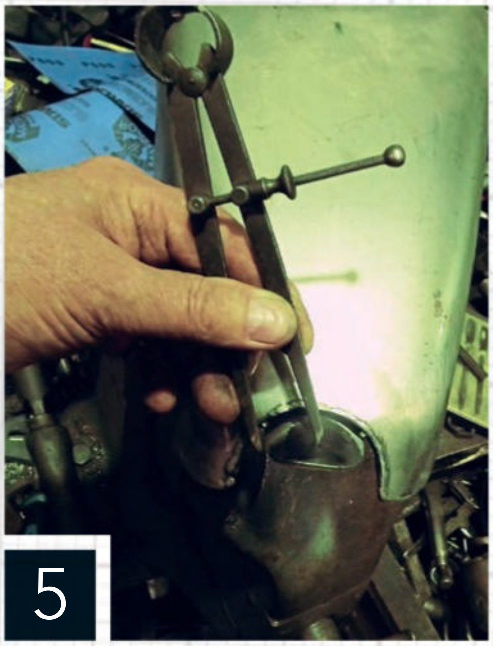
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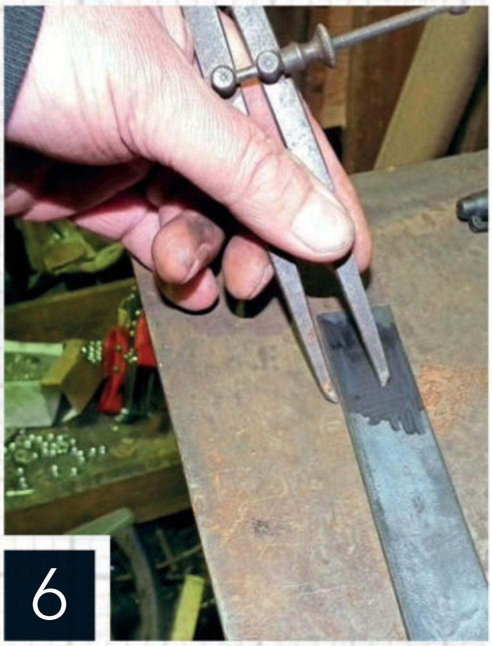
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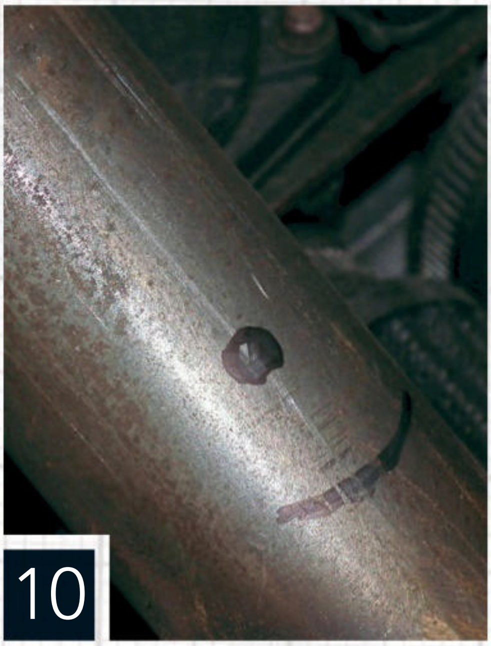
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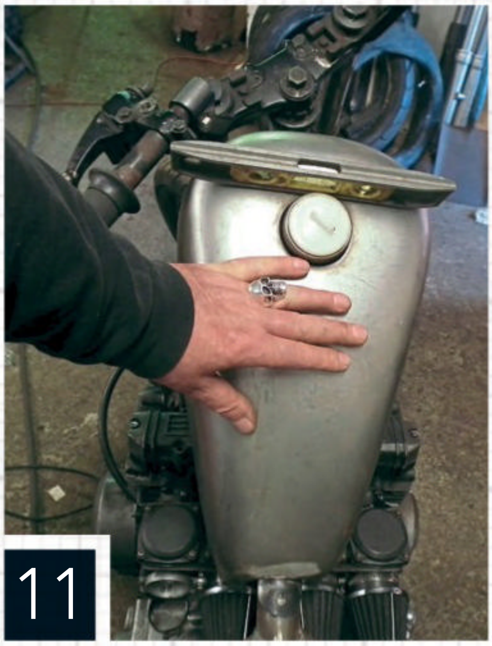
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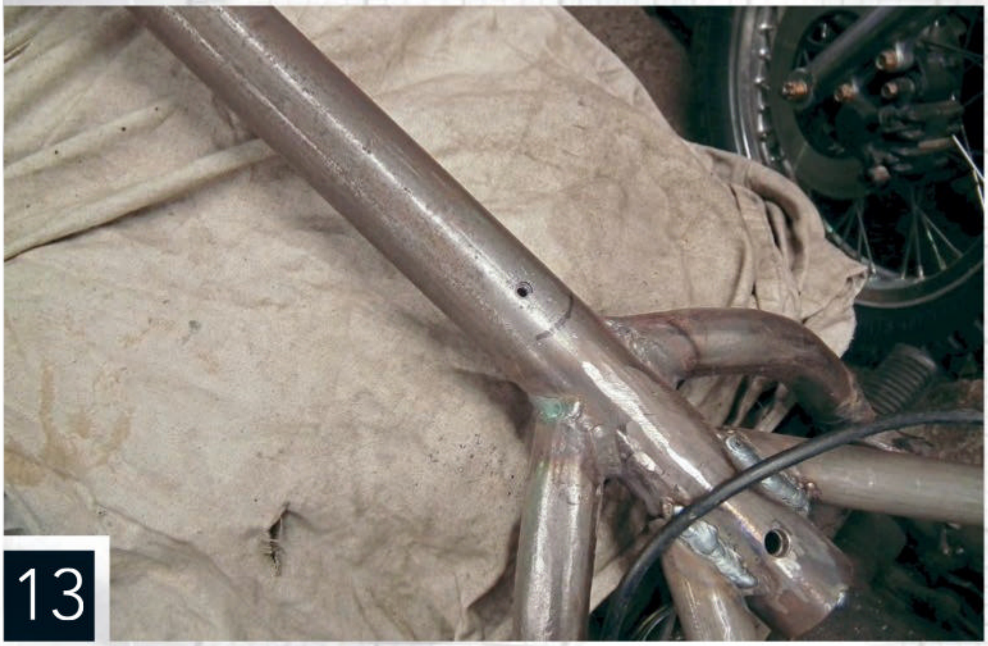
my tank. With the holes drilled in the tank mounts, as a sanity check I took a piece of steel with a square edge, checked the frame was still level and, using a bubble to make sure I was holding the piece of steel square, dragged it down the top tube (Fig.9), leaving a discernible line that was the 12 o'clock position on the top tube (Fig.10).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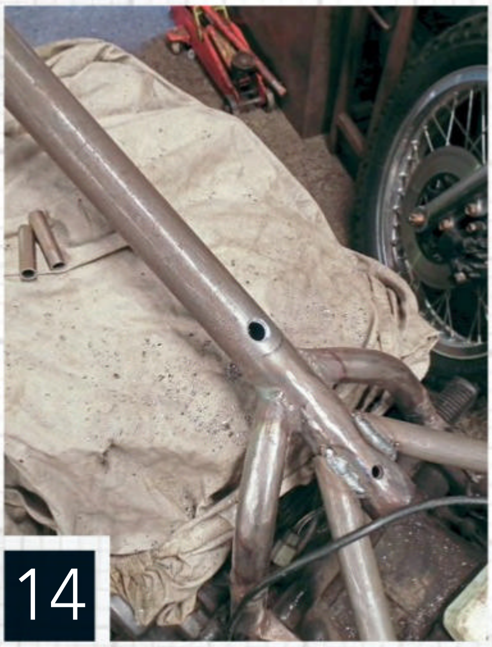
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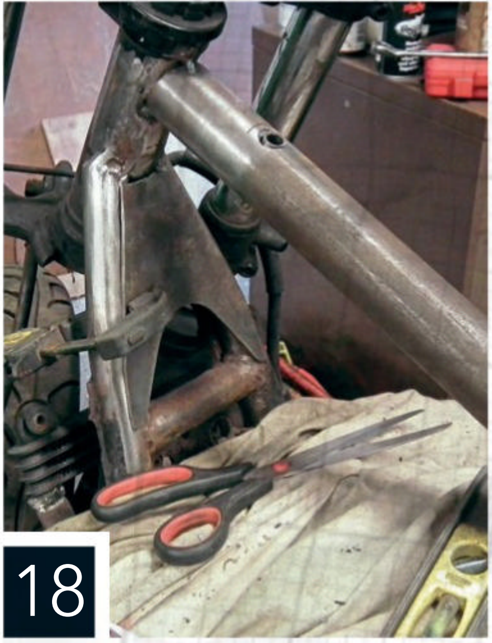
Placing the tank back on the frame, and using the bubble to make sure it was level left to right (Fig.11), meant I could transfer-mark the holes using a felt pen (Fig.12). While the front mount was a snug fit on the tube, and the centre of the pen mark lay on the line I'd scribed, the rear mount wasn't so snug, and allowed for around a quarter-inch (6mm) of side-to-side movement, so I lined it up with the line I'd scribed on the top tube before making a pen mark.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With that out of the way, I eyeballed up the centre of the pen marks on the scribe mark, and centre-punched the tube. Drilling the first hole's easy (Fig.13), but for the second hole something like a 5mm or 6mm drill bit's usually long enough to drill right through the tube, but small enough that it tends to find the six o'clock position on the tube. That just leaves making sure the drill's perpendicular to the tube's axis, which is easy enough to eye up.

After putting the 5mm holes in the top tube, I worked my way up to a half-inch drill bit for the through holes, and a three-quarter-inch blacksmith's drill bit to countersink the top one (Fig.14). With the holes drilled, the crush tubes were a light drive fit in the holes – the countersink at the top is to allow the weld to be ground flush with the tube and accommodate the curved tabs on the tank. The bolts dropped through the tank mounts and straight into the frame (Fig.15). This's something that's worth taking the trouble over as it'll stand out like a sore thumb if the tank's canted one way or the other, but the only thing I actually measured in the process of sorting it out was the length of the crush tubes (although the frame and the tank were both checked for level).

The only other major job at the front of the frame was sorting out the headstock brace tube. I had a notion to clean up the stub of the old one but, once I'd had a closer look at the way it was welded between the down tubes, it was fairly clear that making that look nice wasn't really an option. I'd managed to chop the old tube off just below the surface of the down tubes, so I decided to plate across them with a gusset plate and weld the top tube to that.

I made the fish-mouth gusset by making a rough card template (Fig.16), folding it in half to find the centre, laying a hole-saw on it, and marking where the centre of the hole-saw fell on the fold line (Fig.17), and then cutting the hole out of a piece of eighth-inch (3mm) before lining the template up with the hole and marking out the cut lines so I could band-saw it out (Fig.18).

The brace tube was cut from some inch-and-a-quarter inch seamless, and placed off to one side to mark the front angle. Putting a mark on the tube to indicate the 3, or 9, o'clock positions helps this to be more accurate (Fig.19). With the front cut off, I marked where the rear met the bottom of the top tube. These long cuts're some of the hardest to make, but everyone has to get lucky once, and that was obviously my day for it (Fig.20). It even looks like there's going to be room to get the cam cover off once it's all welded up (Fig.21).

It's a bit of a toss-up as to what comes next – somewhere to put the electrics, or rip it all apart and finish welding the frame. And on that cliff-hanger...

MR. BRIDGES

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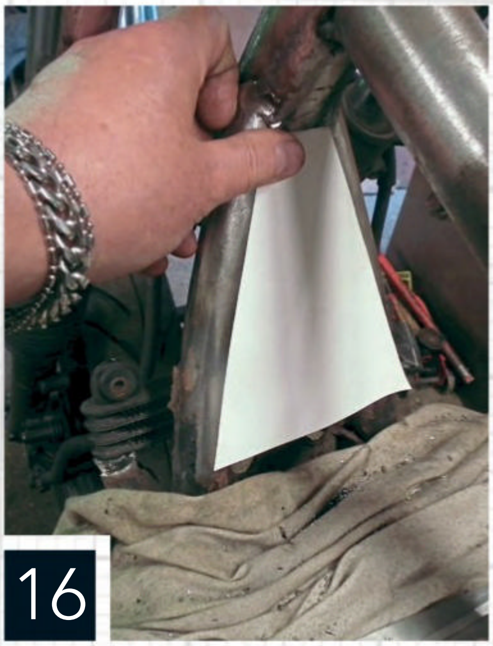
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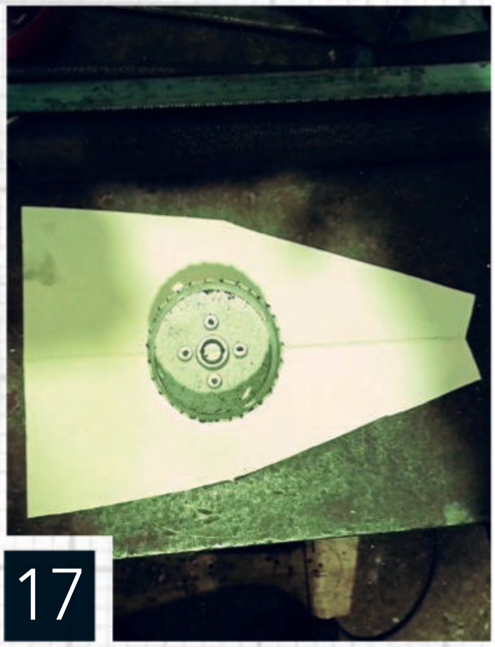
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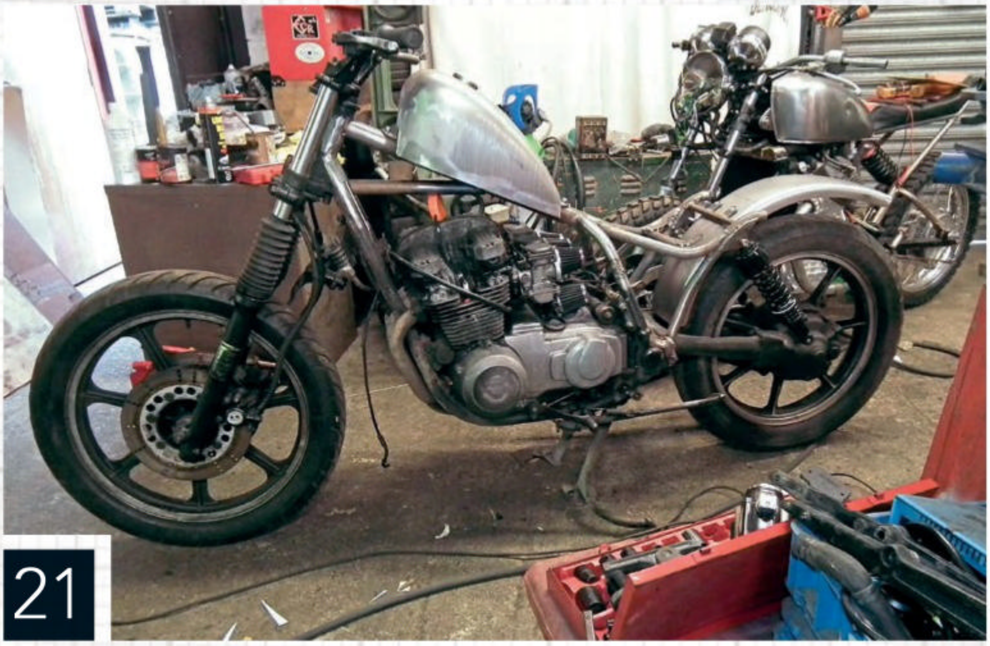
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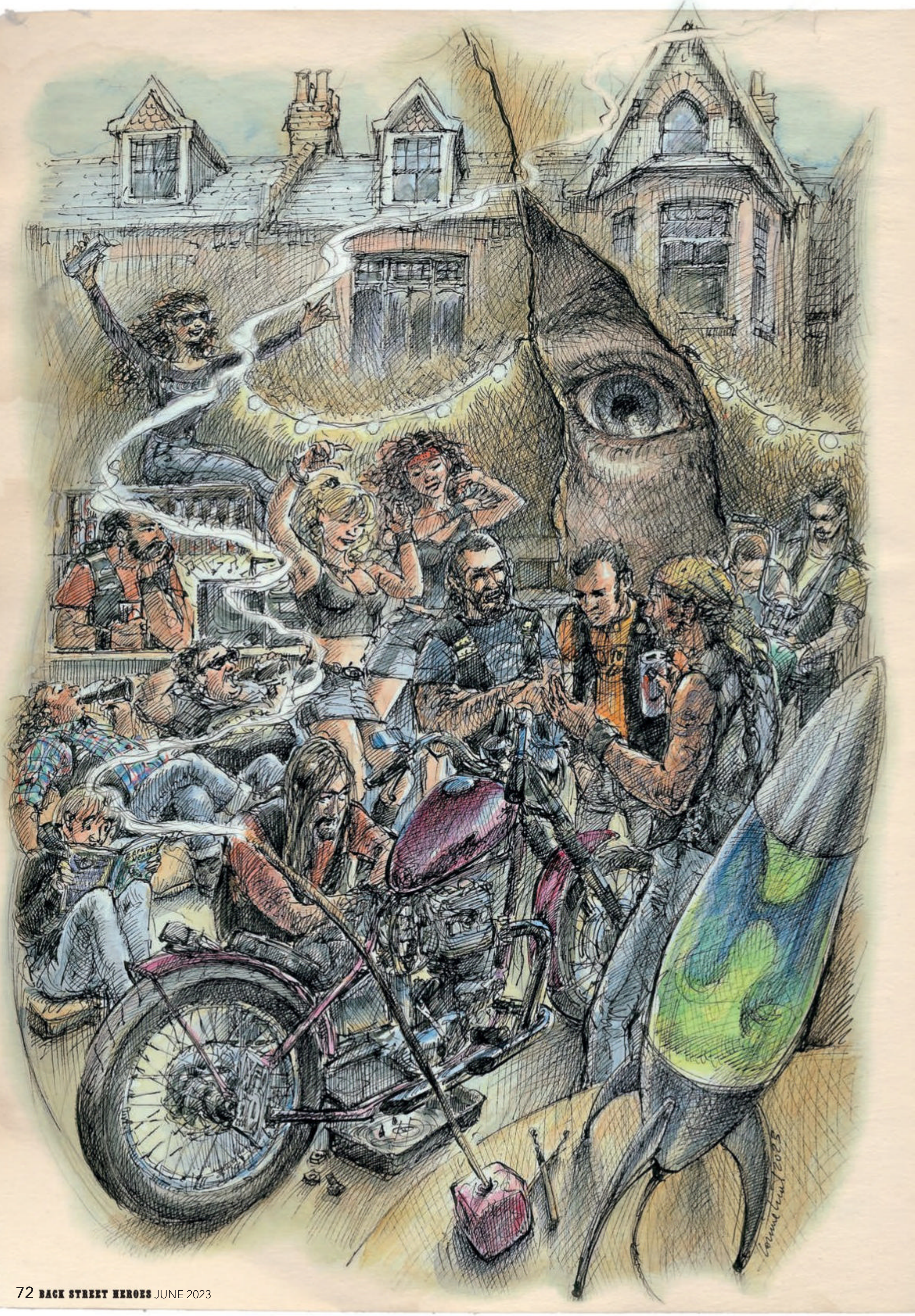


RECENTLY I BOUGHT AN OLD HOUSE UP NEAR THE CANAL – A LOVELY OLD SEMI-DETACHED VICTORIAN TERRACE. EVERYTHING WAS FINE AT FIRST, AND IT REALLY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN BETTER. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS WAS BEFORE I DISCOVERED THE HOUSE CAME WITH A HIDDEN PROBLEM; ONE THAT DEFINITELY DIDN'T SHOW UP ON ANY SURVEY. IF ONLY I'D KNOWN, I CERTAINLY WOULD'VE NEVER MOVED IN. FOR THIS WAS NO ORDINARY HOUSE, THIS HOUSE WAS...

INFESTED WITH BIKERS!

IT really was – they were under the stairs, behind the walls, everywhere. I hadn't even dared look in the shed; the sound of tinkering quickly made me realise it'd be better to avoid the place. You could hear them late at night, the sound of metal filing and drilling, who knows what they get up to in there with that endless tinkering? Of course I've heard the stories, about what they call the 'projects' – the long, drawn-out rituals usually held around winter time when, presumably, it's too dark to go out and forage for parts. They say it's because they're partially blinded at night, due to something called Bates? Small, round lights they use to find their way home in the dark, apparently.

Honestly, the house is like a battlefield – they've been listening to Mott the Hoople again, and I think one of them's stolen my lava lamp. This morning I found tie-dye in the cupboard under the stairs, a sure sign they've been nesting. They make these great mounds of old copies of something called 'Motorcycle News', which they pile up so high you can barely see over them, and then there's joss sticks, or whatever they're called; small twigs they burn when they think nobody's around – you can follow the trail of burning wood all through the house... except the bathroom. For some reason I can't ever explain they're never in the bathroom – I swear it's spotless, unlike the kitchen.

One night I came home to this really strange smell coming from the kitchen. At first I thought it was the WD40 they spray everywhere they go, but this was different – much worse. As soon as I opened the door, it was like burning wax mixed with old engine oil. I had no idea what it was, but I knew it was the bikers as only they could come up with such an odious concoction. Making my way carefully into the kitchen, I switched on the light and, to my horror, I saw they'd somehow managed to turn the cooker on!

Straightaway I knew they weren't cooking (it's something they never do, instead they seem to live on toast and bottles of ale) and, as I approached the cooker, my mind was racing – what could these foul denim-clad creatures've been up to now, I asked myself? There was what looked like a pie dish on the cooker ring, except they weren't cooking a mince pie. Peering into the greasy blackness that bubbled on the cooker, I spied something metallic – a winding metal chain they seemed to be boiling in grease. For what reason I still do not know; surely this had something to do with those terrible motorcycles that they seem to worship?

Motorcycles, those fearful totemic

INFESTED WITH BIKERS!

idols they seem to worship obsessively day and night; worshipping what appears to be just a pile of hastily arranged metal work; a seemingly random collection of shiny parts that they collect from far and wide. They start with bare metal skeletons they seem to share amongst themselves then, when you leave them for a few days and come back, they somehow seem to have collected even more bits and pieces, and loosely assembled them into some form of crude sculpture. I've witnessed them gathered around these venerated objects, standing together in groups as they go silent, staring at the crude sculptures, and nodding up and down. One of them invariably begins pointing while the others nod in agreement, and it's at this point further parts're brought forward and offered up in comparison, I've no idea what any of this means, but it seems to be some kind of ritual that can keep them busy for hours on end.

Then there are the parties –wait till I tell you about what they get up to at the weekends when I'm not there! One weekend I came home to what smelled like burning rubber. The little buggers'd left these small, round, black circles all over the dining room floor. It took ages to get the marks off, and there was never any explanation as to how they got there or what any of it meant… though there was one arrangement of circles that extended out of the dining room door and into the front sitting room, all in a perfectly straight line. I'm sure it meant something, but what I don't know.

Over these past few months, I've tried to get rid of them and even got a cat. The poor thing was terrified, wouldn't go near them. I think it was because of the smell? It took ages to realise what that weird smell actually was? Patchouli, the man at the pet shop said – cats hate it, apparently. He then suggested I set some traps for them – small little boxes filled with odd bits of rusty metal. I think he called them autojumbles or something like that? You'd get these little boxes, which were about the size of a shoebox, and when you shook them you could hear the little bits of metal rattling around inside. The man in the pet shop said they were filled with little stalls and, if you left the box in a quiet corner, the bikers'd slowly enter and forget the way out. The first time I put one down it was a Sunday morning, I think, and by the late afternoon the thing was full to bursting! You could hear them inside nattering away to each other. Acting quickly, I closed the box and took it outside. Returning later that night I checked the box, and it was completely empty! There was no sign of them, or the little bits of metal – it was almost as if they'd completely vanished. Somehow, though, they always seem to find their way back – you can hear them rattling around in the basement, foraging for bits of wire and insulation tape. I've since learned not to leave the cable-ties lying around, because they'll steal those by the hundred.

It turns out it's not just me who's been having problems. The next-door neighbour's complained the bikers've been stealing biscuits from her kitchen. At first I thought this was ridiculous, as they seem to live entirely on toast and Pot Noodles, but it turns out they'd been climbing through her letter-box when she was at work and stealing the biscuits. And it wasn't just the plain digestives they'd go for either, it was more likely to be the chocolate biscuits, Penguins, KitKats. that kind of thing. The chocolate biscuits were something the bikers relished with great delight, usually after they'd been celebrating with the joss-sticks. Of course I tried to apologise to the neighbour, and told her the bikers'd been here since I'd moved into the house and, no matter what I'd tried, I just couldn't seem to get rid of them. She told me she'd had a similar problem many years ago after she found her house infested with Mods – tiny little pointy-chinned things that make a terrible high-pitched screeching noise, and never seemed to sleep. Okay, so they didn't seem to make as much mess as the bikers, but she hated the summer – that's when they seemed to multiply by the thousand, and she couldn't even go outside as they'd fill the garden, kicking over the gnomes, and mating with each other at every chance they could get. Eventually the Police were called in after they were declared a public nuisance. That was about the last she ever heard of them, and they haven't been back since, but the odd one does appear now and again, screeching around the house with a terrible high-pitched buzzing.

Thankfully, the bikers've never been quite that bad – at least I've never felt threatened. Sure they can make a bit of noise, but somehow it always appears to be in good spirits. However, there was that time I found one of them tied naked to a leg of the dining room table. That was a sorry sight to behold! He was covered in ale and what looked like baking powder? I had no idea they ate their own so I carefully untied the poor thing, and let it go outside.

Recently I heard they've also been having problems a few streets away after they'd built a new housing development, quite expensive-looking houses by the look of it. The man who owns the corner shop was telling me they'd been having problems with the bikers infesting one of the new properties up on the hill. Apparently, it was nothing like as bad as mine but, all the same, they'd somehow made a right mess of the mono-block drive, and'd over-run someone's man-cave. They'd also apparently tried to take

someone's tools but, seeing as none of them knew what to do with any of them, they'd instead nailed them to a wall. And drew crude little lines around them – that was truly baffling, presumably this was some kind of devotional offering?

The stealing of tools was never a problem with our bikers – they always seemed to have their own. Once I found a big pile of them behind the shed door; rusty looking things of various sizes, all kept together in an old wooden box. When I knew the bikers weren't around, I had a look inside the box, and some of the tools had runic inscriptions cast into them, none of which made any sense to me. I remember one said 3/16th and another 9/16th… perhaps it's some kind of code?

Living with the bikers the past few months hasn't always been easy, but it's also had its moments. I learned they can be quite easily encouraged to perform useful tasks. Once when I had a blowing exhaust on my car, cunningly I left a little trail of biscuits from the shed to the car outside. Leaving a full packet of Jaffa cakes directly below the blowing exhaust, I left them to it.

Coming downstairs in the morning, I went outside and looked under the car and, to my surprise, they'd repaired the exhaust by covering it in a thick gum and wrapping what looked like an old beer can around it, tying the whole thing with wire. Naturally this wasn't quite what I'd expected, but when I started the car, the blowing exhaust seemed to have been fixed, and all for the price of a few biscuits!

Thankfully I'll be moving again soon, and there'll be a side of me that'll be sorry to see the back of the little shits, with their dirty beards and smelly denims. Somehow I think I'll even miss the smell of WD40, too. I was going to take one of the little motorcycles as a souvenir, but I may have underestimated them somewhat. It seems they're even more attached to the little motorcycles than I would've ever expected and, unfortunately, I'm now having to type this with one hand. Still, it could've been worse. At least I can still have children one day, so the doctor said. Especially after the swelling settles.

MURRAY ROBERTSON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
LOUISE LIMB

GARRY STUART RIP

In '91 or '92, at my desk in the BSH office, early on in my time there, I was introduced to a freelance photographer. I had no idea who he was but, keen to change the style of photography in BSH, I asked: "Could you get bikes sharp on a roundabout?"

"Yes," he said without any ego or arrogance, "I could do that."

I didn't know then that the guy'd already shot Grand Prix bikes, and learned much of his craft at muddy motocross meetings on rainy days, so custom bikes in the sunshine were never going to present a problem. I said I wanted to make the bikes look as good as possible in print out of respect to their builders' efforts and commitment, and he grasped this immediately and was soon producing rolls of film containing great riding shots but, more than that, he gave the shoots a distinct flavour, and shot statics of the bikes in front of corrugated iron sheds and brick walls. It was a style all his own, but one that, without a shadow of a doubt, suited the world of custom bikes. He might have started out with his cameras beside a bend at racetracks, but he wholly embraced custom bikes and the burgeoning Harley scene.

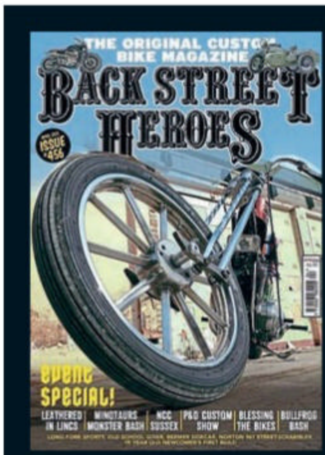
That was the beginning of a friendship that was to last more than 30 years. It wasn't too surprising, really, as we had similar backgrounds and came from coastal places on Liverpool Bay – the fact that he was from Anglesey and I Wirral ('occupied Wales' in his eyes) was the source of endless banter. We went everywhere: the Kent Custom Bike Show, the Bulldog, the Rock n' Blues; we were guests on NCC runs (the first on the wettest possible weekend to Wales where Garry was pleased to be welcomed by numerous Welsh members); we were guests in MC clubhouses, and more. We drank a lot of beer, talked a lot, and covered a lot of miles.

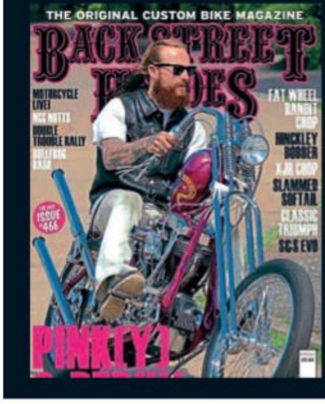
He continued to shoot bikes, working with BSH's new editor Karen Tait, and contributing to Streetfighters. One of his early photographic book projects was a collaboration with Mark Williams, the noted motorcycling journalist, but our paths soon crossed again as I also became a freelance, and our horizons widened; Holland, Daytona, Sturgis, Belgium, Normandy, Wyoming, Scotland – we did a heap of books and magazine features as we ducked and dived like freelances need to. Yeah, we went everywhere. He took the photos, and I made the notes. We also talked a lot about anything and everything on those long journeys, and never got bored. The years passed and, with changes at the magazine, Garry drifted away from BSH for a lengthy spell until, ten years ago, Nik took over, and he again brought his magic to the magazine with chopper features shot at The Trip Out and similar. At this stage to some extent, Garry was specialising in the resurgent chopper scene, and made a point of attending events devoted to them.

We worked together on other automotive subjects, such as hot rods and classic 4x4s, as our friendship endured changes in magazines and subject matter. Garry was quietly pleased that some of his black and white social documentary photography was exhibited in Welsh galleries, and added to the collection of the prestigious National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. He was just as pleased that some young people looking into an iconic Welsh album cover he shot in 1977, Gôg by Meic Stevens, tracked him down and invited him to a festival. This was the subject of one of our last and longest conversations.

Garry was a great photographer, an intelligent guy, and among the most talented of the many talented people that've made BSH into what it is in its 40-year history. I'm proud to say he was my friend, one of my best friends, and he'll be sadly missed.

CAZ CARROLL


THE ORIGINAL CUSTOM BIKE MAGAZINE
BACK STREET HEROES
ISSUE 456
EVENT SPECIAL!
LEATHERED IN LINCS
MINOTAURS MONSTER BASH
NCC SUSSEX
P&D CUSTOM SHOW
BLESSING THE BIKES
BULLFROG BASH


THE ORIGINAL CUSTOM BIKE MAGAZINE
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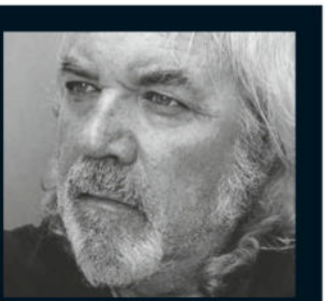
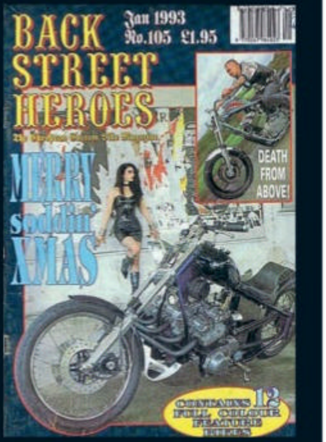
MOTORCYCLE LIVE!
NCC NOTTS
DOUBLE TROUBLE RALLY
BULLDOG BASH
FAT WHEEL BANDIT CHOP
HINCKLEY BOBBER
XJR CHOP
SLAMMER SOFTAIL
CLASSIC TRIUMPH
SCS EVO
ISSUE 466
PINKY

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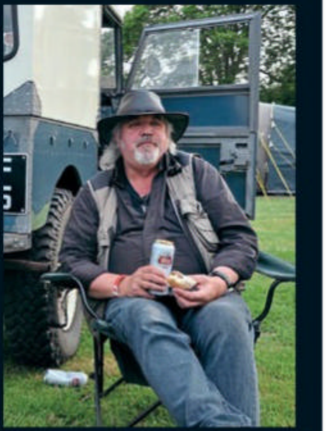

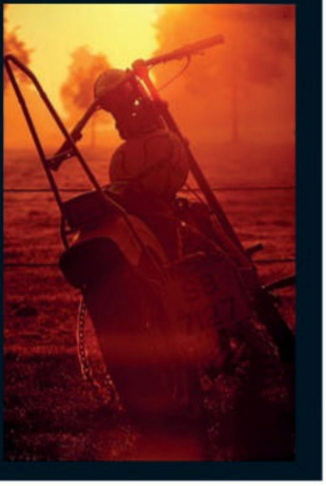

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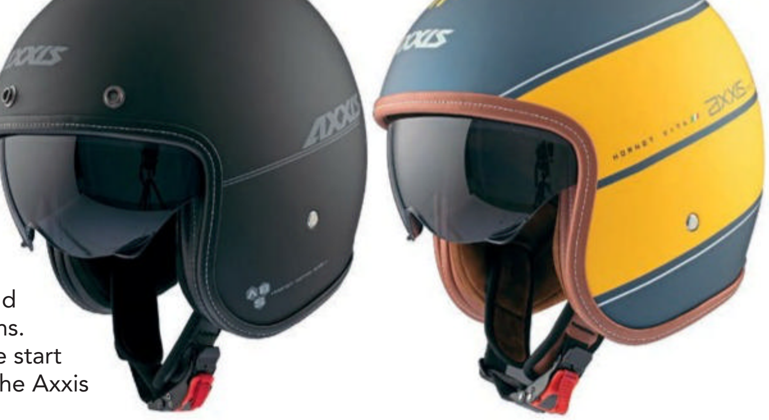
BMW MOTORRAD

AXXIS HORNET SV HELMET



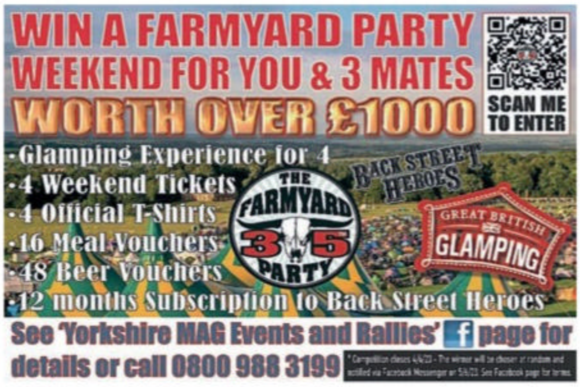
This new open-face from new Spanish helmet company Axxis is a cool-looking helmet made to a very high standard, but with a refreshingly competitive price-tag. They're available in all the usual sizes, have a nice-looking interior, and an easy-to-use-wi'-gloves-on drop-down visor, and come in a huge range of colour options.

Prices for the Axxis Hornet SV range start at £99.99 from anywhere that stocks the Axxis range or **www.bickers-online.co.uk**

WIN! FARMYARD PARTY VIP TICKETS

Next month sees the return of the famous Farmyard Party in Yorkshire (16-18 June); one of Britain's best-loved bike events. This year the Big Top (main stage) features The Bohemians (excellent Queen tribute), A Foreigners Journey, Women In Rock, and more, and there're three other music stages all with their own bars; stunt shows from the Xtreme Stunt Team; a ride-in custom show and a Best of British custom marquee; campfires and secure camping; the cleanest loos on the rally circuit (and showers); food from around the world; an excellent real ale marquee; and a plethora of trade stands to peruse.

We have an exclusive VIP ticket package worth over £1,000 to give away – four entry tickets; a four-person glamping tent; four official T-shirts; 16 meal vouchers; 48 beer vouchers; and a twelve-month BSH subscription, too, and all you have to do to enter is scan the QR code hereabouts.



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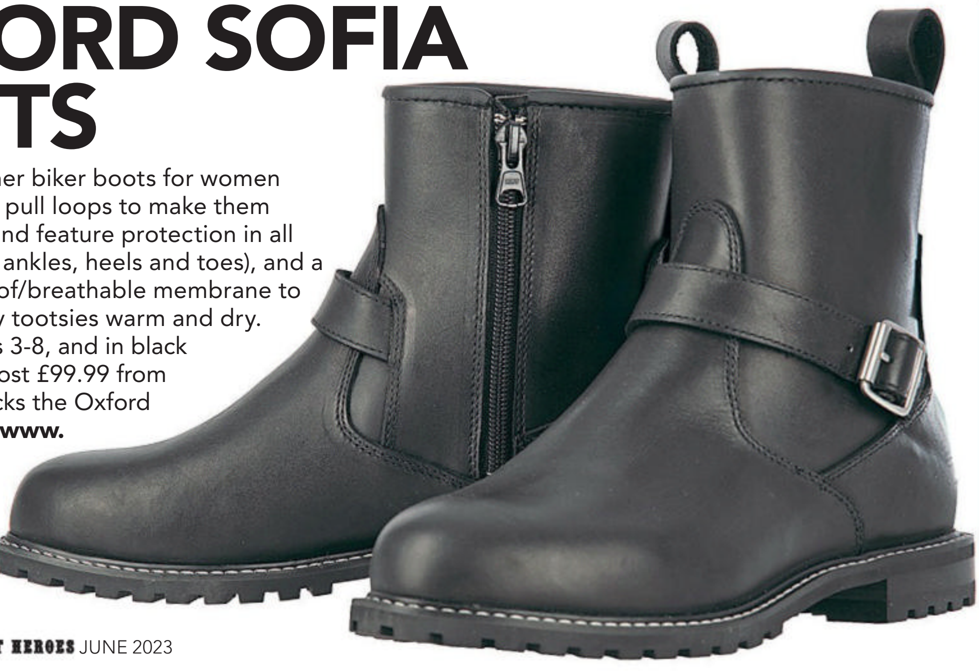
* Competition closes 4/6/23 - The winner will be chosen at random and notified via Facebook Messenger on 5/6/23. See Facebook page for terms.

If you're not lucky enough to win (which you won't if you don't enter!), but you'd still like tickets or more info, go to the event website at **www.mapevents.co.uk**

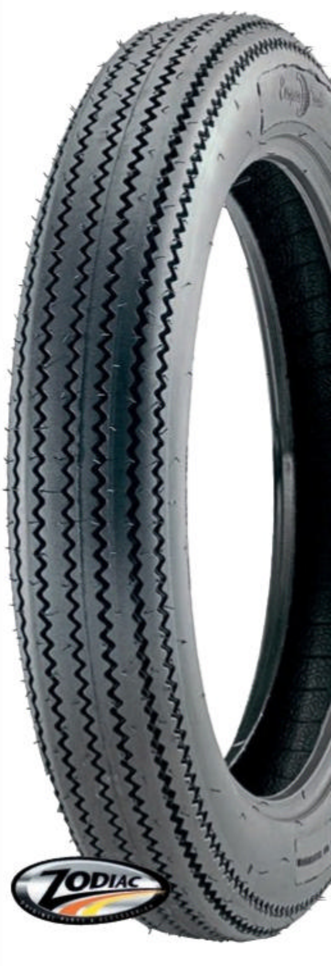
OXFORD SOFIA BOOTS

These classic leather biker boots for women have side zips and pull loops to make them easier to pull on, and feature protection in all key areas (insoles, ankles, heels and toes), and a Rainseal waterproof/breathable membrane to keep ladies' dainty tootsies warm and dry.

Available in sizes 3-8, and in black or charcoal, they cost £99.99 from anywhere that stocks the Oxford Products range or **www.oxfordproducts.com**



EUROPEAN CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE TYRES



These classic-looking tyres're produced in Europe with the performance of modern design, but with an old bias design and dimensions. They're E and DOT-approved, and street legal for use in Europe as well as the US, and're rated P for motorcycles with a maximum speed of 150km/h (93mph), and S for motorcycles with a maximum speed of 180km/h (111mph).

They're available in choices of 2.15-inch, three-inch and five-inch sizes, and you can get them from anywhere that stocks the Zodiac range or **www.zodiac.nl**

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OXFORD HOLTON 2.0 GLOVES

These Holton gloves combine timeless styling with understated CE-approved protection for a reassuringly well-constructed glove that'll withstand the test of time. Keeping the same classic styling, the 2.0 builds upon the original version with an improved 100% aniline leather outer shell, new hidden knuckle guards, and an even better fit. Premium finishes, such as suede overlays, and a snap wrist-fastening add the finishing touches to clean, classic styling lines. Available in black or brown, they can also be poppered together when not in use, and cost just £39.99 from anywhere that stocks the Oxford Products range or **www.oxfordproducts.com**

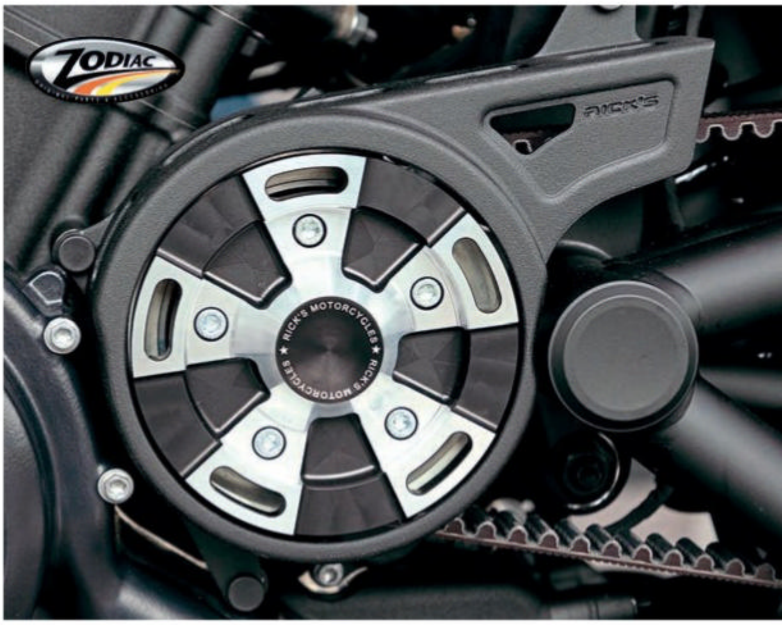
IWATA HP-TH2 AIRBRUSH

Iwata
HP-TH2 JAPAN LG

The Iwata HP-TH2 Gravity Feed Dual Action Trigger Airbrush is The Airbrush Co's best-selling airbrush, and has a unique head system that easily atomises a wide variety of spray materials including candies and metallics. It's multi-adjustable without needing to adjust your compressor, has options for covering large areas quickly, and has an unmatched range of spray patterns and effects. It has a colossal 5oz/150ml fluid cup with lid; a quick-flush pre-set handle; a slim-line ergonomic grip handle with a textured, non-slip grip; a spray gun-style trigger; a nozzle spanner to remove the nozzle for cleaning; and comes with a ten-year warranty.

Get yours from The Airbrush Company on **01903 767800** or **www.airbrushes.com**

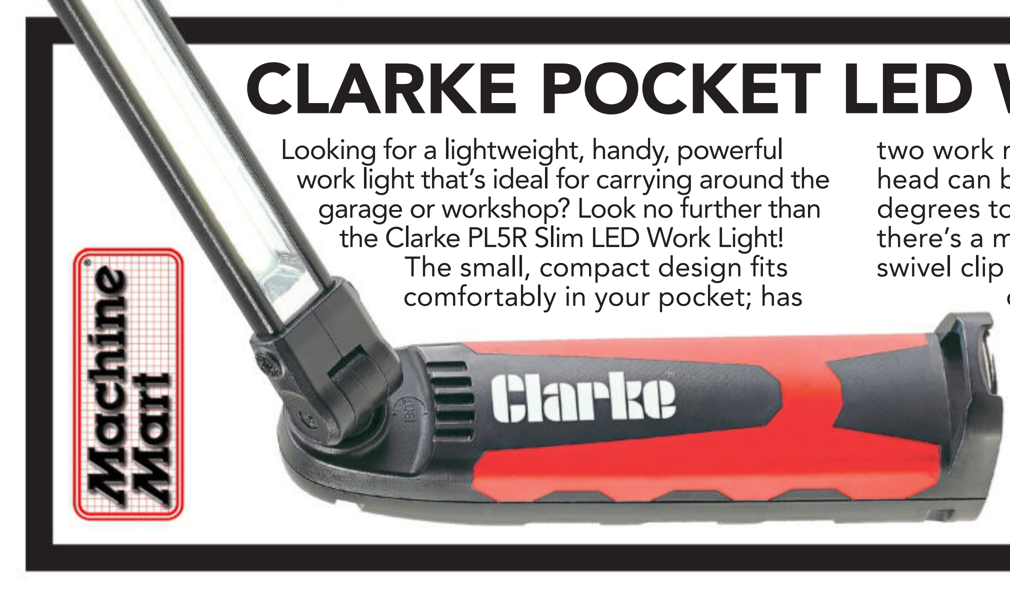
RICKS SPORTSTER FRONT PULLEY COVER



These exclusively designed covers allow you to view the rotating front pulley, and are made from stainless and aluminum with high-end finishes like anodising and powder coating (the pulley cover kit and the required installation hardware kit must be ordered separately).

Get yours from anywhere that stocks the Zodiac range or **www.zodiac.nl**

CLARKE POCKET LED WORK LIGHT



Looking for a lightweight, handy, powerful work light that's ideal for carrying around the garage or workshop? Look no further than the Clarke PL5R Slim LED Work Light!

The small, compact design fits comfortably in your pocket; has two work modes (floodlight or torch); the head can be flipped/rotated up to 180 degrees to help illuminate tricky angles; there's a magnetic handle and base; and a swivel clip to make it perfect for hands-free operation. The lithium-ion battery provides over three hours of battery life, and charges using a USB charging lead and plug adapter.

It costs just £32.39 from your local Machine Mart store or **www.machinemart.co.uk**

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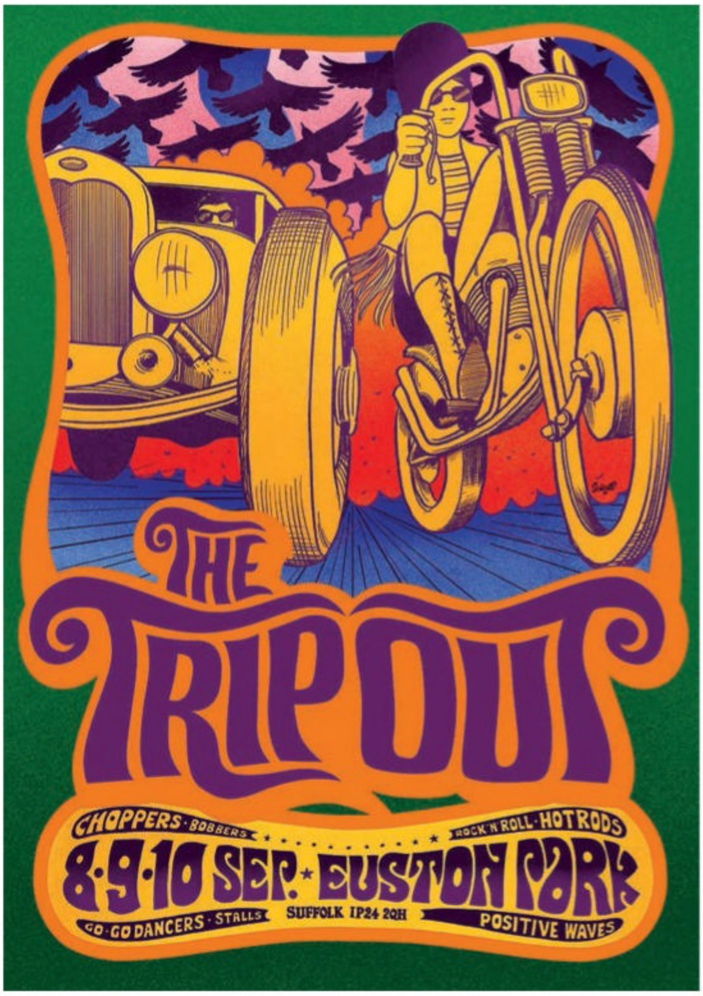
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LETTERS

Need to agree, or even disagree, with something you've seen in the mag? Heard a bloody awful joke you think we should groan at? Email **nik@backstreetheroes.com** or send it snailmail to the address somewhere in the mag!

STAR LETTER

This month's Star Letter wins a **Weise Redwood Shirt, rrp £139.99.** A classic check shirt, but with an abrasion-resistant aramid lining and CE-armour at elbow, shoulder and back. Rated A for protection, it's fastened with a zipper to keep it securely closed while you ride. Find out more at **thekeycollection.co.uk**

DEAR BSH,

I was just flicking through issue 446, and rereading the NEC show bit – fantastic array of custom bikes. At the end there's a thank you to the MCIA and that got me thinking.

At the moment it seems every council's introducing either congestion charges or ill-thought-out ULEZ charges. We all know that if there were more motorcycles taking the place of cars on the road there'd be less congestion, and also that, as most commuters do very low mileages, reasonably-priced electric bikes'd be an affordable convenience for more commuters than the very high-priced cars advertised on TV.

The Motor Cycle Industry Association need to think very carefully about this as, by asking, and helping the current riders rights organisation to get the Government to look at the ridiculous testing regime for motorcyclists, and to remove some of the obstacles, they'd ensure their own longevity, help encourage more bikers on to the road and, I suppose, prove they're not just an old boys' club milking the industry, but serious about preserving it for the long term.

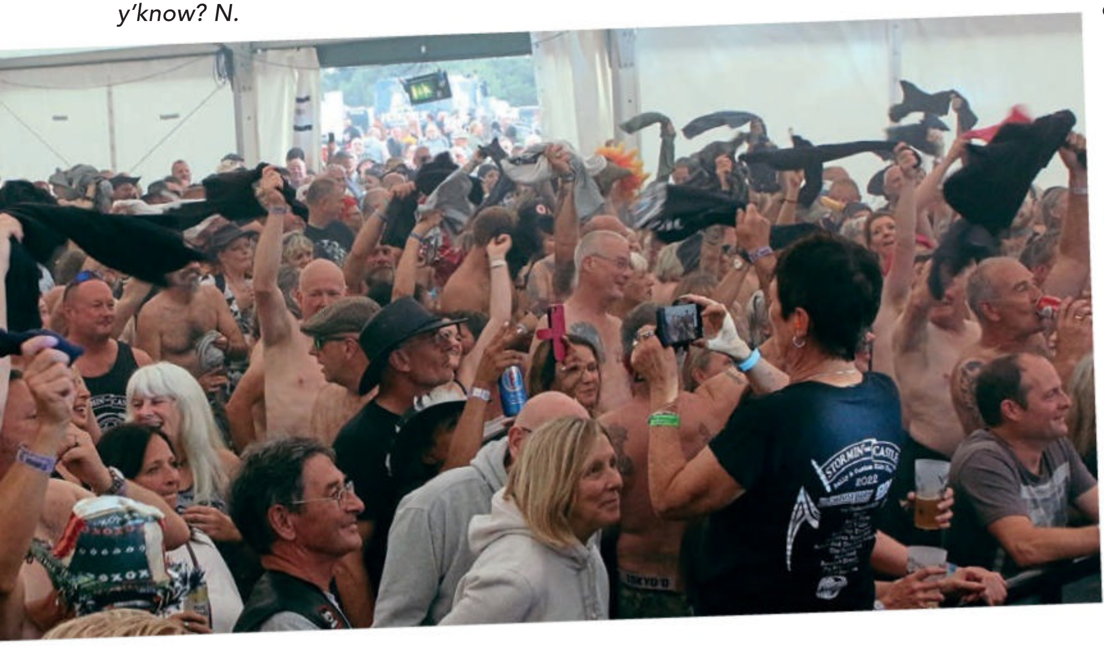
KARL

DEAR BSH,

Now I know you have better things to do than answer inane questions, but I'm intrigued. In issue 464, page 45, what's with everyone twirling their T-shirts over their heads, and laughing? It's got me – is tequila involved? It does strange things to people, speaking from experience.

LES

That's just Stormin' the Castle, Les – they're like that up there, y'know? N.



DEAR BSH,

I wonder if the BSH readership can help? I'm now the other side of 60, shall we say, and I've been a reader for more years than I can remember and, like many, have paid my dues of riding in all weathers with nothing but either denim or leather (which, we all know, soaks up rain like a sponge).

I have a Yamaha Warrior 1700 which I've customised over the last few years, but here's my shout for help. I've noticed more and more custom filler caps on petrol tanks, and I've searched t'internet (Peter Kay) all over, and cannot find anything that'll fit my bike. As it's a Yamaha, it has the regular filler cap with the usual 8-10 Allens holding it to the tank (as per EU crap I know they're designed to stop spillage), and I'd like a custom filler cap to finish it off nicely. My bike has a finished paint job so nothing can be welded into or on to the tank, but surely there's a way of making a filler cap that's still held on by the Allens, but the opening part is custom? Either chrome finish or polished ally?

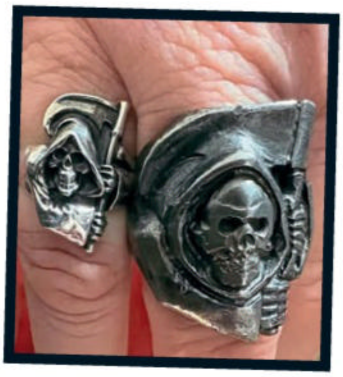
Can anyone help? Does anyone know anyone who makes such a thing that can be fitted by using the original base and pin that the modern fillers hinge on? Drop me an email at rmc602309@yahoo.co.uk if you do?

Keep up the good work, chaps, great mag as always!

**WAYNE G,
DEVON**

I'd try Danny at Fastec Racing if I were you, Wayne, as he's good at that sort of thing, or Paul at Demeanour Customs as he's a bit of an outside-the-box genius, too. N.

DEAR BSH,



What annoys me about the Sons Of Anarchy series is they've hijacked the Grim Reaper emblem. Being a long-term Terry Pratchett and Discworld fan, he has the same character, but called Death, and made rings with the same depiction, but he made his 20-plus years ago – well before SOA turned up.

I bought the smaller ring from the Discworld Emporium on the 'Net, and got the larger one made by a guy in France out of a stainless steel nut, ground and filed into the Death ring, but now whenever anyone sees my rings instantly they think I'm a fan of SOA – not a Pratchett fan.

RIK 'TRON' TURNER

That's the thing that annoys you about SOA?!? Jesus, you're a lot more tolerant than I am! N.

DEAR BSH,

I just saw the latest issue of BSH, 469, and your cover bike just floored me! My God, that's everything that a chopper is supposed to be! The flowing lines are perfect! And that paint job is absolutely breathtaking! The angles used for your photos make me feel like I'm standing right there, ogling this masterpiece. Everyone involved is to be commended!

I also want to thank you for printing that old pic of our dragbike from back in the day. It seems that, as one gets on in years, just a tiny bit of recognition feels really, really great. I guess some of us need to leave a mark, however small, showing that we were here.

We've finally got the good weather over here, too (Ontario, Canada), so I think that I'll go and pull the bike out of hibernation. Take care, and have a fantastic riding season, eh?

RON (BRONSON)

Cheers for the kind words, Ron, appreciate 'em. And cheers for sending the pic, too. N.

THE ORIGINAL CUSTOM BIKE MAGAZINE
BACK STREET HEROES
MAY 2023
ISSUE #469
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DEAR BSH,

Hope all's well, and Spring is on the horizon. I've been working on one of my old bikes, and've been adapting what parts I already have, instead of buying new stuff. This is my take on the old 'Diamond In The Rough' saying. It's routed into the wood so that I can't go changing it.

RONALD WHEELER

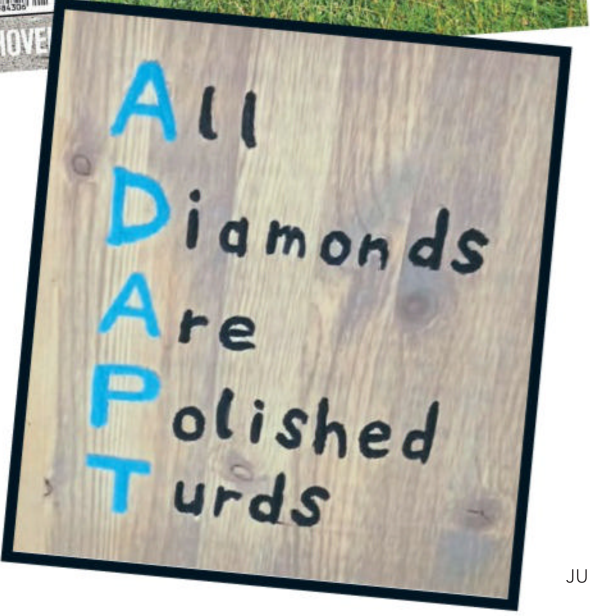
Equally, whoever coined the old saying 'You can't polish a turd' never had access to a can of spray lacquer and a buffing wheel... N.

DEAR BSH,

I know you like old pics so how about this one of me back in the day on my BSA? And me now, at the Farmyard, with a beard and not as much hair?

BLAIRY

Comes to us all, guv, comes to us all. N.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AUTOJUMBLE.INFO

EVENTS

Advertise your events here for free and get them seen by everyone in bikerdom! Email the info to **nik@backstreetheroes.com**

MAY

1st May: Stone Circle Bike Show at Supermarine RFC, Supermarine Rd, Swindon, Wilts (SN3 4BZ). More info from Facebook.

1st May: Gears of Goodwill Custom Show at the Cross Keys, Derby Rd, Swanwick, Alfreton, Derbys (DE55 1BG). More info from 07934 660151 or Facebook.

4-7th May: Tarquin's Rally at the Breighton Ferry, Breighton, Selby, Yorks (YO8 6DH). More info from Facebook.

5th May: Wheels & Wax at Venue 229, 229 Great Portland St, London (W1B 1PF). More info from Facebook.

5-7th May: NABD's You've Been Nabbed Rally at the Royal Cheshire Showground, Flittogate Ln, Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire (WA16 0HJ). More info from www.nabd.org.uk

5-7th May: Baskerville Custom Show at the Baskerville Hall Hotel, Clyro Court, Clyro, Hay on Wye, Powys (HR3 5LE). More info from 07580 113517 or ashbournenick@gmail.com

6th May: Dusty's Charity Bike Night at the Longmore Hall, Banff Rd, Keith, Aberdeen (AB55 5HA). More info from Facebook.

6th May: Birmingham MCC's Custom Show at Birmingham & Solihull Rugby Football Club, Forshaw Heath Lane, Portway, Birmingham (B94 5LH). More info from Facebook.

6th May: Harrogate Motor Show at Harrogate Rugby Club, Rudding Lane, Harrogate, Yorks (HG1 3QD). Free entry. More info from 07785 355307 or Facebook.

7th May: Spring Autojumble at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ), More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

7th May: Romney Marsh Classic Bike Show & Jumble at Hamstreet, near Ashford, Kent (TN26 2JD). More info from www.elkpromotions.co.uk

7th May: Italian Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

7th May: Coronation Bike Show & International Female Ride Day at the Iron Horse Ranch House, High Street, Market Deeping, Lincs (PE6 8EB). More info from www.ironhorseranchhouse.co.uk

12-14th May: Pendragon MCC's Dragonfire Rally at the Chequers Inn, Pertenhall Rd, Keysoe, Beds (MK44 2HR). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07923 349723 or Facebook. PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

13th May: Bosun's Bike Bonanza at the Selsey Arms, Cowfold Road, Coolham, Horsham, W. Sussex (RH13 8QJ). More info from www.bosunsbikes.com

13th May: The Early Hook Up at Mutt Motorcycles, Lakeside, Gate B, Lifford Lane, Kings Norton, Birmingham (B30 3NU). More info from Facebook.

13-14th May: Malle Beach Race at Margate Beach, Margate, Kent. More info from www.mallelondon.com

14th May: BMW Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

14th May: NCC Surrey's Freewheel Burning Custom Bike Show at the Dog & Duck, Prince of Wales Rd, Outwood, Redhill, Surrey (RH1 5QU). More info from Facebook.

14th May: Ancient to Modern Motorcycle Show at Dovermans**,** Whitestone, Worcester Road, Hereford (HR1 3RX). More info from Facebook.

14th May: Mere Brow Autojumble at the Leisure Lakes, The Gravel, Mere Brow, Preston, Lancs (PR4 6JX). Tickets £15 stalls or £2.50 punters. More info from www.merebrowautojumble.co.uk

14th May: Classic Bike & Car Show at the Goat Inn, Long Rd, Skeyton, Norwich, Norfolk (NR10 5DH). More info from Facebook.

14th May: Classic Bike Gathering at The Mile, Pocklington, Yorks (YO42 1TW). More info from Facebook.

14th May: Spring Break Kustom Kulture at Stonham Barns, Pettaugh Rd, Stonham Aspal, Stowmarket, Suffolk (IP14 6AT). More info from www.stonhambarns.co.uk

14th May: Silent Rumble Bike Show at the Music Box, Bourne Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex (UB3 1QT). More info from madmaxhd@aol.com or Facebook.

14th May: Industry & Supply's Harley Day at Industry & Supply, Building 14, The Depot, Royal Ordnance Rd, Weedon Bec, Northants (NN7 4PS). More info from www.industryandsupply.com

18-21st May: Biker Fest Italy at Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy. More info from www.bikerfest.it

19-21st May: South-West Chopper Fest at Birds Farm, Knapp, North Curry, Somerset (TA3 6AZ). More info from www.southwestchopperfest.co.uk

19-21st May: Double Trouble Rally at Court Farm Country Park, Wolvershill Road, Banwell, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset (BS29 6DL). More info from www.doubletroublerally.com

19-21st May: BAD MCC's Monks Rally at a site in West Kyloe, Northumberland (TD15 2EF). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07800 730378 or Facebook.

19-21st May: Smoking Dog Rock & Custom Show at Bishop Auckland Rugby Club, Bridge Road, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham (DL14 7PA). More info from Facebook.

19-21st May: Tyne Cyclones MCC's Last Reivers Rally at Clennel Hall, Clennell, Alwinton, Morpeth, Northumberland (NE65 7BG). Tickets £18 prebook or £22 on gate. More info from 0191 284 3506 or Facebook.

20th May: Off-Road/Adventure Bike Day at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Crossroads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

20th May: Bikers Hangout Gathering at the Forest Hills Hotel, Overton Dr, Frodsham, Cheshire (WA6 6HH). More info from Facebook.

20th May: CCW Ceredigion's Custom Show at the Rhydypennau Inn, Bow Street, Aberystwyth, Dyfed (SY24 5AA). More info from Facebook.

21st May: Gold Wing Day at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ), More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

21st May: The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride. More info from www.gentlemansride.com

21st May: Two-Stroke Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

21st May: Musos at the Shelley at the Shelley Arms, Old Guildford Rd, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex (RH12 3JU). More info from Facebook.

21st May: Rugby Bikefest at Rugby Town Centre, Rugby, Warks. More info from www.bikefest.rugbyfirst.org

21st May: Ravens MCC's Bike Show at the Bob Carter Centre, School Rd, Drayton, Norwich, Norfolk (NR8 6DW). More info from Facebook.

25-28th May: Taunton MAG's Tone Vale Tea Rally at a site on Old Pawlett Road, Highbridge, Somerset (TA9 3RH). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07780 960869 or Facebook.

26-28th May: Hangar Zero 1's Festival Moto at Aérodrome d'Oyonnax-Arbent, Ain, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France. More info from www.hangar-zero-1.com

26-29th May: The Main Event at Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Rd, Podington, Beds (NN29 7XA). More info from www.santapod.co.uk

26-29th May: Celtic Dragons' Party in the Yard at a site in Mid-Wales. Tickets £20 weekend or £10 a night. More info from Facebook.

27th May: BMC Oxford's British Bike Day at the Red Lion, The Green, Cassington, Witney, Oxon (OX29 4DN). More info from Facebook.

27th May: Bikers for Supergood Autism's Coastal Ride from Seaways Café, Fimber Road, Fridaythorpe, Driffield, Yorks (YO25 9RX) at 10am. More info from www.supergoodbikersforautism.com

28th May: Bideford Bike Show at Bideford Quay Car Park, The Quay, Bideford, Devon (EX39 2HW). More info from 07817 543961 or www.bidefordbikeshow.org

28th May: RBLRB Day in aid of the Poppy Appeal at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

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email: greedypigsmcc@hotmail.com
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www.ogrimcc.org

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29th May: Margate Meltdown Run at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

29th May-10th June: Isle of Man TT Races on the Isle of Man. More info from www.iomtt.com

31st May: NCC Leicester's Bike Night at the Bulls Head, Hinckley Rd, Leicester (LE9 9JE). Free entry. More info from 07721 331857 or Facebook.

JUNE

1-4th June: Unwanted MCC's Bike & Trike Custom Show at The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports & Social Club, Shobnall Rd, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs (DE14 2BB). Tickets £13 prebook or £16 on gate, £4 Saturday. More info from 07761 931226 or www.unwantedmcc.co.uk

1-4th June: Big Knock Diesel Bike Rally at the Blue Ship, The Haven, Billingshurst, W. Sussex (RH14 9BS). More info from www.dieselbike.net or Facebook.

2-4th June: UXB Rat & Survival Bike & Trike Show at the Ogri Clubhouse, Kemble Airfield, Kemble, Cirencester, Gloucs. More info from Facebook.

2-4th June: Potts Biker Bash at Castle Cary Rugby Club, Brook House Field, Castle Cary, Somerset (BA7 7PF). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07988 769005 or tcb@gmx.co.uk

2-4th June: Perverts in Leather Rally Club's Fetish, Fun & Frolics Rally at the Ukranian Youth Centre, Weston-on-Trent, Derbys (DE72 2BU). More info from www.pilrc.org

2-4th June: Brothers MRC's Rally at Keynsham Rugby Club, Bristol Rd, Keynsham, Bristol (BS31 2BE). Tickets £15. More info from Facebook.

2-5th June: Killarney Bike Fest at Muckross Rd, Poulnamuck, Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland. More info from www.irelandbikefest.com

3rd June: Fortress Motorcycles' North Yorkshire Custom Show at Paul Priest's Field, Northallerton Road, Northallerton, Yorks (DL7 9LG). Tickets £20 (£5 camping). More info from www.fortressmotorcycle.com

3rd June: Nortalje Chopper Show in Nortalje, Sweden. More info from www.custombikeshow.se

3rd June: NCC Northants' Custom Show at The Stag's Head, High St, Earls Barton, Northants (NN6 0JG). More info from Facebook.

3-4th June: Outkast Company Festival at the Amber Valley Rugby Club, Lower Somercotes, Somercotes, Alfreton, Derbys (DE55 4NQ). More info from Facebook.

4th June: VJMC/Japanese Day at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ), More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

4th June: MAD Sunday (Motorcycle Awareness Day) & MAG London at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

8-11th June: Ride 'Til We Rot Society's Right Rotten Piss-up at the Breighton Ferry, Breighton, Selby, Yorks (YO8 6DH). Tickets £10. More info from 07492 724651 or Facebook.

8-11th June: HDRCGB Region 13 & 21's International Rally at Naseby Village Hall, Naseby Rd, Haselbech, Naseby, Northants (NN6 6DE). Tickets £30 members or £35 non. More info from www.hdrcgbrally2023.co.uk

9-11th June: Crossbreeds MCC's Scruffy Puppy Rally at Bourne Rugby Club, Milking Nook Drove, Bourne, Lincs (PE10 0AX). Tickets £15 prebook or £20 on gate. More info from 07804 087403 or Facebook.

9-11th June: Indian Riders Fest at Budweis, Czech Republic. More info from www.indianridersfest.eu

9-11th June: Welsh Coast MCC Summer Rally at Scurlage, The Gower, Swansea (SA3 1BA). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07948 417280 or Facebook.

9-11th June: Reading MAG's Lion Rally at Gravelley Bridge Farm, Grazeley, Reading, Berks (RG7 1LG). More info from Facebook.

9-11th June: Sun of Solstice Festival at Newbold Rugby Club, Parkfield Rd, Rugby, Warks (CV21 1EZ). Tickets £15. More info from Facebook.

9-11th June: Dying Breed Show n' Shine at Westbury Rugby Club, White Horse Country Park, Coach Rd, Westbury, Wilts (BA13 4LU). Tickets £20 weekend or day tickets. More info from fletchmartin@hotmail.co.uk or Facebook.

10th June: Chopper Club S. Ireland's Day Show at the Welcome Inn, Rockfield, Dungarvan, Co Waterford, Eire (X35 TX36). More info from Facebook.

10th June: Bad Wabbit Shindig at Newtown Social Club, Greencourt Drive, Bognor Regis, W. Sussex (PO21 5EU). Tickets £5. More info from Facebook.

10th June: Daventry Motorcycle Festival at Daventry Town Centre, Northants. More info from Facebook.

11th June: Triumph Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

11th June: Bikers Breakfast at Port Vale FC, Vale Park, Hamil Road, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs (ST6 1AW) from 10am. More info from www.staffsbiker.co.uk

11th June: Motorcycle Autojumble at the Anchor Inn, Croston Rd, Lostock Hall, Preston, Lancs (PR5 5LA). Pitches £5, traders £10, free entry for customers. More info from Facebook.

11th June: Mere Brow Autojumble at the Leisure Lakes, The Gravel, Mere Brow, Preston, Lancs (PR4 6JX). Tickets £15 stalls or £2.50 punters. More info from www.merebrowautojumble.co.uk

11th June: Crank Up at Binton Social Club, Binton Hill, Binton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks (CV37 9TU). More info from Facebook.

11th June: Bikers for Supergood Autism's Dorset Ride from Three Legged Cross, Thorne Way, Three Legged Cross, Wimborne, Dorset (BH21 6FB) at 10am. More info from www.supergoodbikersforautism.com

11th June: Ride of the Ruperts' Hop Run from Orchard Business Centre, Sanderson Way, Tonbridge, Kent (TN9 1QG) at 9am. More info from www.rideoftheruperts.co.uk

14th June: Lincolnshire Bike Night at the Lincolnshire Aviation Centre, East Kirkby, Spilsby, Lincs (PE23 4DE). More info from Facebook.

15-18th June: Estonians MCC's Barnstormer Rally at The Showground, Runswick Lane, Hinderwell, N. Yorks (TS13 5HP) Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from estoniansmcc@outlook.com or Facebook.

16-18th June: Yorkshire MAG's Farmyard Party. More info from www.mapevents.co.uk

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NO CARS WITHOUT A PRE-BOOKED CAR PASS • STRICTLY NO PEDESTRIANS • NO COLOURS TO BE WORN ON SITE PLEASE • NO GLASS ALLOWED ON SITE

16-18th June: Midge Biters Rally at Stornoway Golf Club, Lady Lever Park, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis (HS2 0XP). More info from 07966 457924 or Facebook.

16-18th June: Bussiere Bikers' Bash at Hotel Route 66, Avenue de la Liberation, 87320, Bussiere Poitevine, Dept 87, France. Tickets 30 Euro. More info from mixcook@aol.com or www.route66hotel.com

17th June: Braithwell Car & Bike Show at the Ruddle Centre Fields, Doncaster Road, Braithwell, Rotherham, Yorks (S66 7BA). Free entry. More info from Facebook.

17th June: Dirt Diggers 6 at the Eddie Wright Raceway, Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, Lincs (DN15 8QZ). More info from Facebook.

17th June: NCC Somerset's Cheddar Custom & Classic Bike Show at the Riverside Inn, Cliff Street, Cheddar, Somerset (BS27 3PX). More info from Facebook.

17th June: Tribe Ayrshire's Custom Bike Show at the Scottish Assault Courses, Newmilns Road, Galston, Ayrshire (KA4 8PA). More info from Facebook.

17th June: Maverick's Marvellous Motorcycles' Indoor Motorcycle Show at Destination Triumph Dorset, Unit 4, Stony Lane, Christchurch, Dorset (BH23 1EZ). More info from Facebook.

18th June: Mono Motorcycles' Custom & Classic Bike Show at Mono Motorcycles, New Barn Office, Row C, Unit 4&5, Funtington, Chichester, W. Sussex (PO18 9DA). More info from www.monomotorcycles.co.uk

18th June: VMCC Banbury Run at the British Motor Museum, Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warks (CV35 0BJ). More info from www.banbury-run.co.uk

18th June: Italian Bike Day at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ). More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

18th June: Polish Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

21st June: Royston & District MCC's Bike Show at the Eternit Sports & Social Club, Whaddon Rd, Meldreth, Royston, Herts (SG8 5RL). More info from Facebook.

21st June: Solstice Bike Night at the Dashwood Roadhouse, Old Oxford Rd, Piddington, Bucks (HP14 3BH). More info from Facebook.

21st June: Bucks Classic Motorcycle Club's Shiny Bike Night at the Plough, Cadsden Rd, Cadsden, Princes Risborough, Bucks (HP27 0NB). More info from 01494 868218 or Facebook.

23-25th June: Show Bike Acquitaine at Montalifornia, Gironde, France. More info from Facebook.

23-25th June: Chao Bikes & Music Festival on Guernsey. More info from www.chaosevents.com

23-25th June: Bear Town Bikers MCC's Bearly Standing Rally at the Harrington Arms, A523, Bosley, Macclesfield, Cheshire (SK11 0PH). More info from Facebook.

23-25th June: Inner Circle RRC's Goosin' The Fox Rally at the Fox & Goose, The Street, Greywell, Odiham, Hamps (RG291BY). Tickets £18.50 or £10 day. More info from Facebook.

23-25th June: Blackpool MAG/Jesters MCC's MAGster Rally at Fleetwood RUFC, Melbourne Ave, Fleetwood, Lancs (FY7 8AY). Tickets £17.50 prebook only. More info from www.jestersmcc.org.uk or Facebook.

23-25th June: Bracan MCC's Pistons & Pints Rally at the Breighton Ferry, Breighton, Selby, Yorks (YO8 6DH). Tickets £18 prebook or £20 on gate. More info from www.bracanmcc.co.uk or Facebook.

23-25th June: Newcastle Chopper Club's Custom & Classic Show at Blaydon Rugby Club, Crow Trees Ground, Hexham Rd, Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne (NE16 3BN). Tickets £10 weekend, £1 show. More info from 07889 699673 or Facebook.

23-25th June: HDRCGB Region 19's New Forest Rally at the Trojans Sports Club, Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh, Hants (SO50 9HT). Tickets £20 members or £25 non. More info from 07887 746441 or region19@hdrcgb.org

23-25th June: Shoulder of Mutton MCC's Cowpat Rally at the Amber Valley Rugby Club, Somercotes, Derbys (DE55 4PD). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07752 430009 or Facebook.

24th June: Wheels at the Windmill at Denver Windmill, Sluice Rd, Denver, Downham Market, Norfolk (PE38 0DZ). More info from Facebook.

24th June: 1066 Custom Show at Rye Rugby Club, New Road, Rye, E. Sussex (TN31 7LS). Tickets £5. More info from 07598 145651 or Facebook.

24th June: Gotts Park Custom Show at Gotts Park Golf Club, Armley Ridge Road, Leeds (LS12 2QX). More info from Facebook.

24-25th June: UK Stuntdays' Stunt Weekend at Newark Showground, Lincoln Rd, Coddington, Newark, Notts (NG24 2NY). More info from Facebook.

25th June: Prescott Bike Festival at the Prescott Speed Hill Climb, Gotherington, Gloucs (GL52 9RD). More info from www.prescottbikefestival.co.uk

25th June: Rickman Day at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ), More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

25th June: Romney Marsh Classic Bike Show & Jumble at Hamstreet, near Ashford, Kent (TN26 2JD). More info from www.elkpromotions.co.uk

25th June: Triton & Cafe Racer Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

25th June: Swaton Vintage Day at The Park, Thorpe Latimer, Sleaford, Lincs (NG34 0RF). More info from www.swatonvintageday.com

25th June: NCC Cambs' Custom & Classic Bike Show at the Cross Keys, High Street, Upwood, Ramsey, Cambs (PE26 2QE). Tickets £2. More info from 07539 673952 or Facebook.

25th June: Seaford Motorfest at the Martello Fields, The Esplanade, College Rd, Seaford, E. Sussex (BN25 1JD). More info from Facebook.

25th June: Notton Crickets Club's Bike & Car Gathering at Notton Cricket Club, George Lane, Notton, Wakefield, Yorks (WF4 2NE). More info from Facebook.

25th June: Vintage 1/8th Mile Racing at Deenethorpe Aerodrome, near Corby, Northants (NN17 3AN). Tickets £65 racers, £10 spectators, prebook only. More info from www.mphvintagesprint.co.uk

25th June: Ladies Bike Day at Industry & Supply, Building 14, The Depot, Royal Ordnance Rd, Weedon Bec, Northants (NN7 4PS). More info from www.industryandsupply.com

25th June: East Coast Harley Club's Custom Show at the George & Dragon, The Street, Thurton, Norwich, Norfolk (NR14 6AL). Tickets £3. More info from Facebook.

26th June: Cassington Bike Night at Cassington, Oxon. More info from www.cassingtonbikenight.wordpress.com

28th June: NCC Leicester's Bike Night at the Bulls Head, Hinckley Rd, Leicester (LE9 9JE). Free entry. More info from 07721 331857 or Facebook.

30th June-2nd July: Punta Bagna International Motorcycle Show at Courchevel, Les Trois Vallées, France. More info from Facebook.

30th June-2nd July: Chinnor Bike Dayz at a site on the B4009 Lower Icknield Way, Princes Risborough, Bucks (HP27 9BB). More info from Facebook.

30th June-3rd July: Bike Festival South West at the Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge, Cornwall (PL27 7JE). More info from www.bikefestivalsw.com

30th June-2nd July: QRRA's One Aim Rally at Homsestall Road, Faversham, Kent (ME13 0SE). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate, days £15. More info from www.qrra.co.uk

30th June-2nd July: Future MCC's Clay Pigeon Rally at South Wingfield Social Club, High Rd, South Wingfield, Alfreton, Derbys (DE55 7LX). Tickets £15 prebook or £20 on gate, £10 days. More info from 07813 992431 or Facebook.

JULY

1st July: NCC London Diamond Day Custom Bike Show at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

1st July: Tiger MCC Kilmarkock's Custom Bike Show at Kilmarnock Rugby Club, Queen's Drive, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire (KA1 3XF). More info from Facebook.

1-2nd July: Summer Nationals at Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Rd, Podington, Beds (NN29 7XA). More info from www.santapod.co.uk

2nd July: Honda Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

2nd July: NCC Beds' Back to Basics Bike & Car Show at the White Horse, Mill Road, Husborne Crawley, Beds (MK43 0XF). Tickets £3. More info from 07834 462423 or Facebook.

2nd July: Brooklands Motorcycle Show at Brooklands Museum, Brooklands Dr, Weybridge, Surrey (KT13 0SL). More info from www.brooklandsmuseum.com

2nd July: Independent Bike Fest at Harpenden Common, Harpenden, Herts. More info from Facebook.

3rd July: Lugershall Bike Night at Lugershall, Bucks. More info from Facebook.

6-9th July: Liberators Harley Club's Summer Rally at the White Pheasant Hotel, Lenwade House Drive, Great Witchingham, Norfolk (NR9 5QP). Tickets £40 prebook only. More info from 07899 700706 or Facebook.

7-9th July: Dragstalgia at Santa Pod Raceway, Airfield Rd, Podington, Beds (NN29 7XA). More info from www.santapod.co.uk

7-9th July: Krazy Horse's The Weekender at Bradwell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. More info from www.krazyhorse.co.uk

7-9th July: Motorbike & Trike Weekend at the Rose & Crown, Low Rd, Holbeach Hurn, Spalding, Lincs (PE12 8JN). More info from www.rosecrownholbeach.com or Facebook,

7-9th July: 13 Co Fair at Penn Meadow Farm, Bayleys Bottom, High Wycombe, Bucks (HP10 8PD). More info from www.13co.co.uk

7-9th July: Team SOBER MCC's Pissed as a Newt Rally at Walton Sports & Social Club, Walton Recreation Ground, Shay Lane, Wakefield, Yorks (WF2 6LA). More info from Facebook.

8th July: Spartan MCC's Rock Night at Boarshaw Working Men's Club, Boarshaw Rd, Middleton, Manchester (M24 6GB). More info from Facebook.

8-9th July: American Muscle/Classic Car, Truck & Bike Show at the Grove Recreation Ground, Cane Lane, Grove, Wantage, Oxon (OX12 0AA). More info from Facebook.

8-9th July: Thornbrough Farm Events' VWoom Boom Festival at Thornbrough Farm, Redhill Rd, Birmingham (B38 9EH). Tickets £15. More info from Facebook.

9th July: Indian & Victory Bike Day at the Ace Cafe, London. More info from www.london.acecafe.com

9th July: The Infamous Land's End Run from Starbucks, Chiverton Cross, A30, near Truro, Cornwall at 10am. More info from Facebook.

9th July: Airhead Association Day at the Sammy Miller Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hamps (BH25 5SZ), More info from www.sammymiller.co.uk

9th July: Bikers Breakfast at Tittesworth Reservoir, Meer Brook, Leek, Staffs from 10am. More info from www.staffsbiker.co.uk

9th July: Mere Brow Autojumble at the Leisure Lakes, The Gravel, Mere Brow, Preston, Lancs (PR4 6JX). Tickets £15 stalls or £2.50 punters. More info from www.merebrowautojumble.co.uk

9th July: Par Carnival Classic Bike & Car Show at Par Running Track, Moorland Rd, Par, Cornwall (PL24 2PB). More from Facebook.

9th July: Café Nero Bike & Trike Gathering at the Market Square, St Neots, Cambs. More info from Facebook.

14-16th July: TWATS Zombie Rally at the Breighton Ferry, Breighton, Selby, Yorks (YO8 6DH). More info from Facebook.

14-16th July: NOTAS MCC's Bits & T*ts Bike & Trike Rally at the Sutton Staithe Hotel, Staithe Road, Sutton, Norfolk (NR12 9QS). Tickets £20 prebook or £25 on gate. More info from 07737602776 or Facebook.

14-16th July: Worcester Custom Show at the Coney Green Showground, Ribbsford Road, Stourport, Worcs (DY13 0TE). Tickets £15 prebook. More info from 07743 135858 or Facebook.

14-16th July: Team Sober MCC's Pissed as a Newt Rally at a site in Scarborough, Yorks. More info from Facebook.

15th July: The 101 Run at Dreamland, Marine Terrace, Margate, Kent (CT9 1XJ). More info from www.the101run.com

15th July: NCC Sussex's Innit to Winnit Custom Show at the Bull's Head, Boreham Street, Herstmonceux, E. Sussex (BN27 4SG). More info from Facebook.

15th July: Bikers for Supergood Autism's Route 1066 Run from Thurrock Services at 10am. More info from www.supergoodbikersforautism.com

15-16th July: Mallory Park Bike Bonanza at Mallory Park, Kirkby Mallory, Leics (LE9 7QE). More info from www.malloryparkcircuit.com

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EDITOR:
NIK SAMSON
nik@backstreetheroes.com
07884 052003
DESIGN:
GARETH WILLIAMS
PUBLISHER:
TIM HARTLEY
SALES EXECUTIVE:
OWEN HIBBERT
OHibbert@Mortons.co.uk
01507 529410
GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER:
SUE KEILY
CIRCULATION MANAGER:
STEVE O'HARA
MARKETING MANAGER:
CHARLOTTE PARK
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR:
DAN SAVAGE
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR:
NIGEL HOLE
FREELANCE CONTRIBUTORS:
COLIN DARLOW, LAUREN RADWELL, PAUL CLARK, DEL HICKEY, DIRTY MIKE, GARRY STUART RIP, DAVE BATCHELAR, MR BRIDGES, MURRAY ROBERTSON, LOUISE LIMB, AGI, CAZ CARROLL, NEIL LIVERSIDGE, RICK HULSE
EDITORIAL ADDRESS:
BACK STREET HEROES, MORTONS MEDIA, MORTON WAY, HORNCASTLE LN9 6JR
SUBSCRIPTIONS:
01507 529529
WEBSITE:
WWW.BACKSTREETHEROES.COM
ENQUIRIES AND BACK ISSUES:
01507 529529
24hr answerphone
ARCHIVE ENQUIRIES:
JANE SKAYMAN
jskayman@mortons.co.uk
01507 529423

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READERS' Lives

Send pics of your bike, your lady, your bloke (but not your dinner, this isn't Facebook) to **nik@backstreetheroes.com**

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ABOVE: Another great old pic from Chris Boyle

BELOW: Hoss' Ironhead in the sunshine

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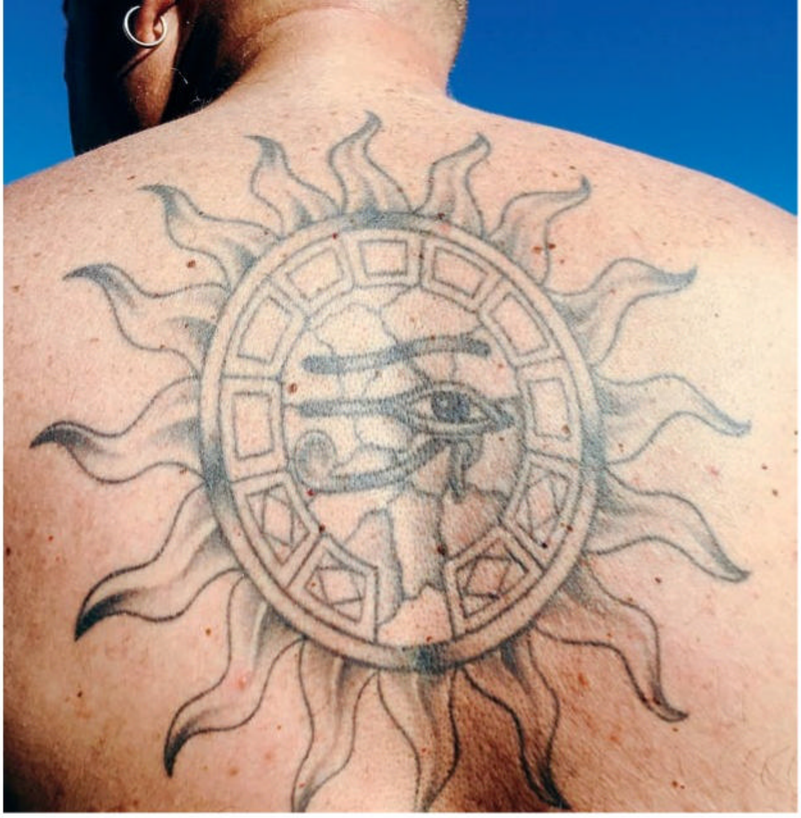
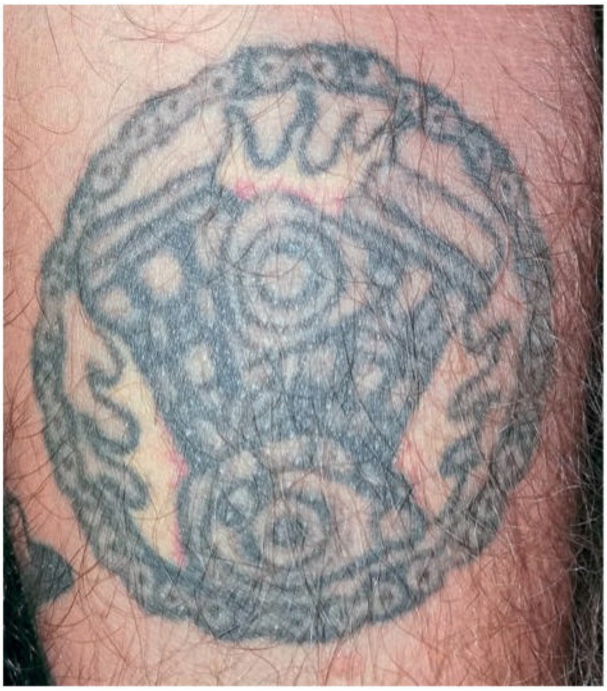
ABOVE: James Munro's rip-off Chinese Honda 125's been turned into a classic twin-shock scrambler in a '60s-style

BELOW: Jimy NCC London's own bike – a rather sparkly Bandit chop!

Les' swingarm Shovel in one of the various guises it's had since he bought it in 1975!

READERS' ~~Lives~~ Tatts



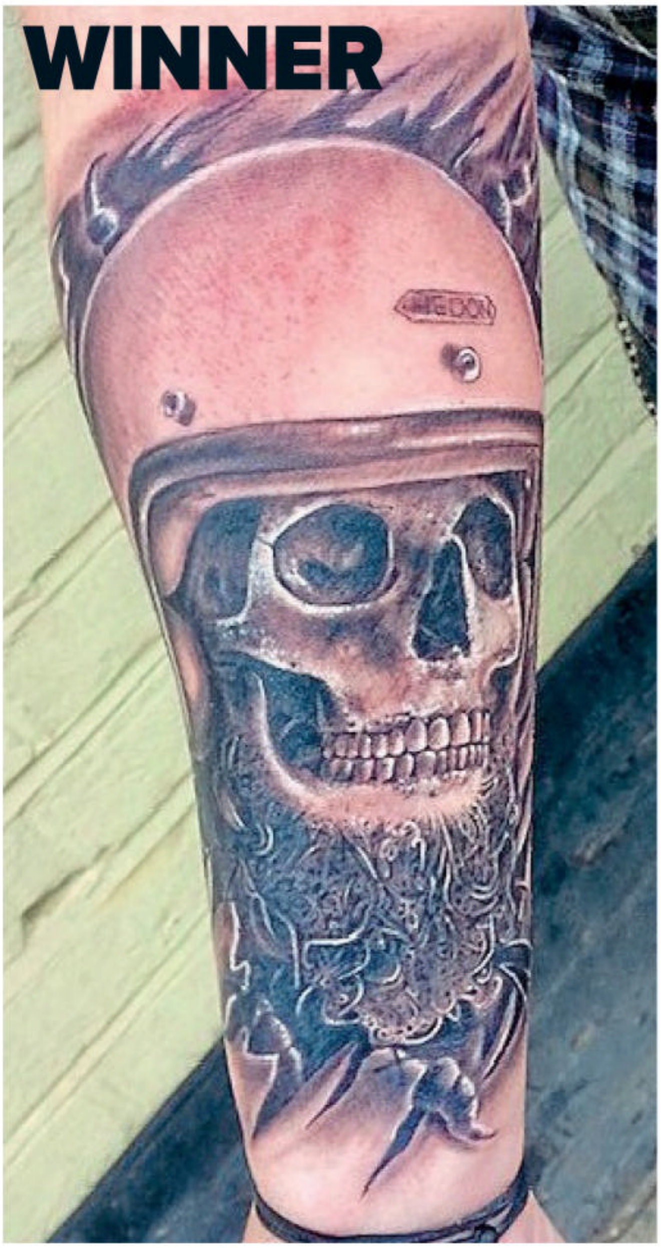


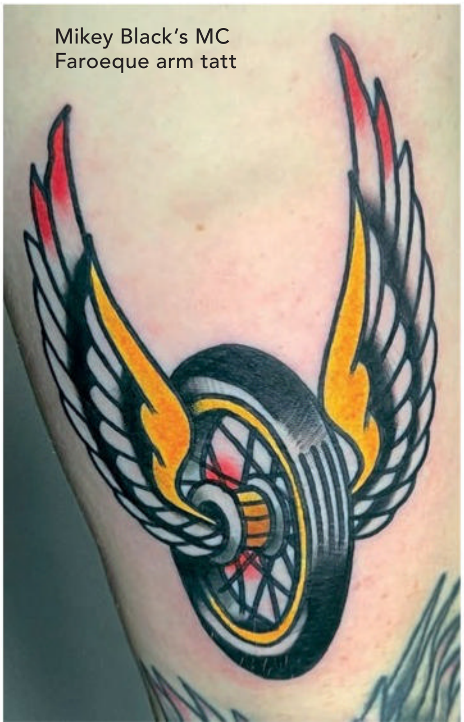
ABOVE: Jamie's back-piece, done years ago

LEFT: Shaun from Brighton's tatt, done back in 2007, and designed for him by his daughter

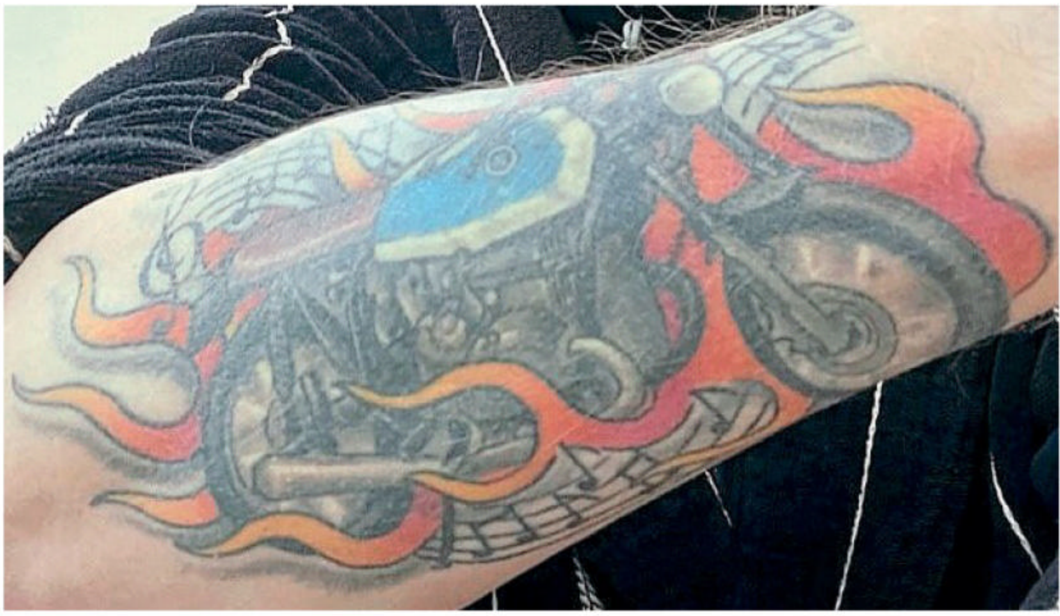
RIGHT: Gary Taylor's arm, incorporating the helmet previously seen in Readers' Lives, October last year

BELOW: Horace's BMW bratoo… geddit? Brat, tattoo – bratoo… oh well, please yerself

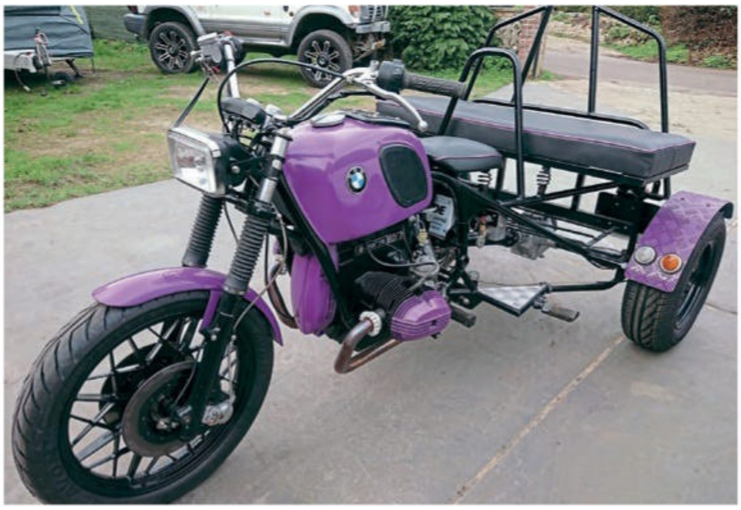




Mikey Black's MC Faroeque arm tatt



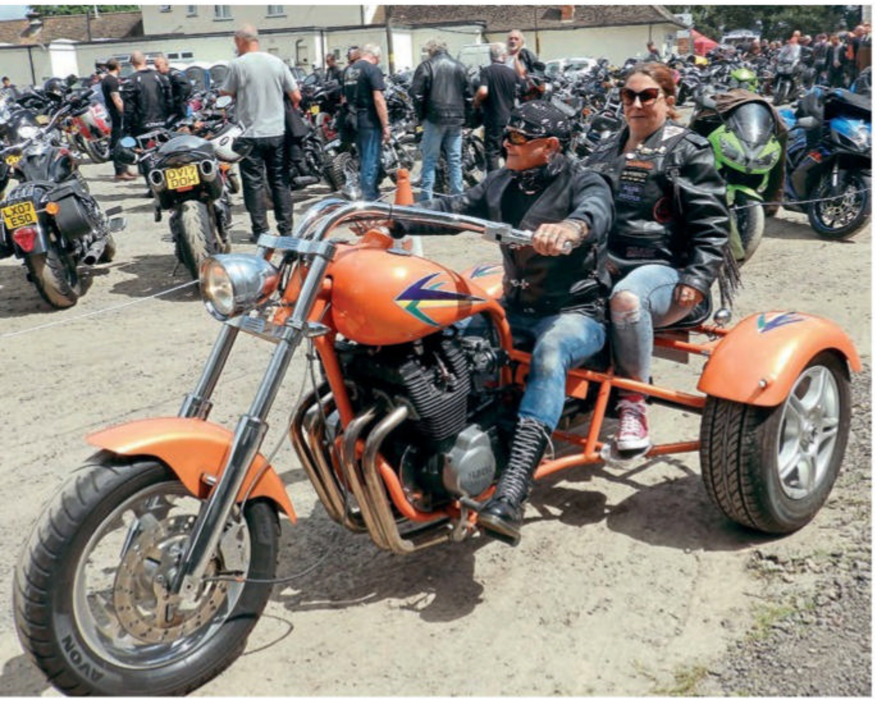
READERS' ~~Lives~~ Trikes

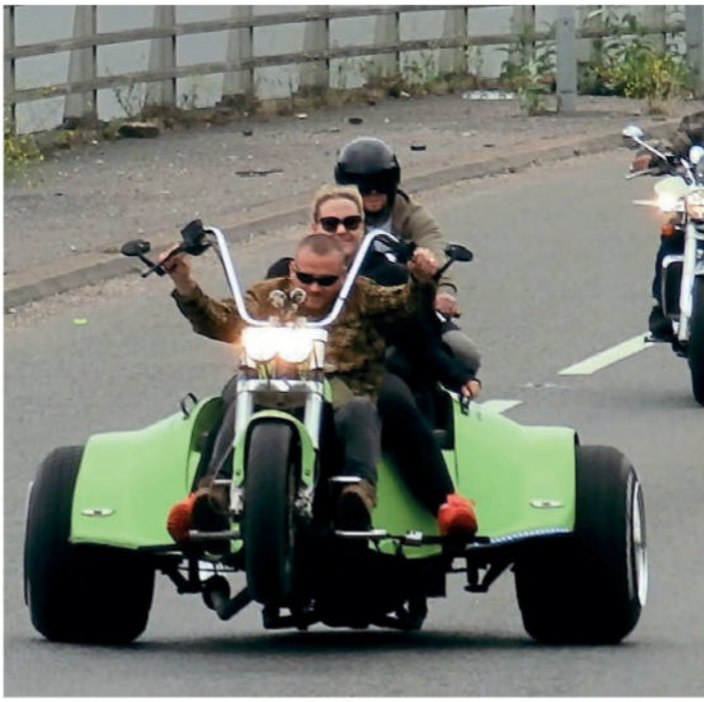


LEFT: Blackie's good lady's BMW trike shortly after it was finished by Woodsy's Workshop near Lowestoft

ABOVE: Lady triker on the freeway…

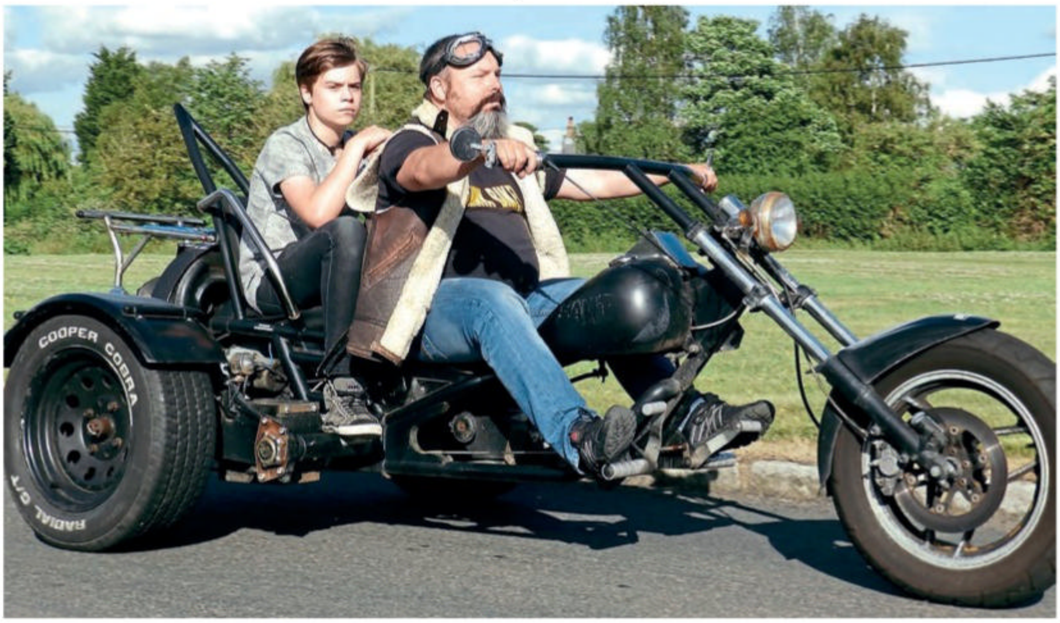
BELOW: Great three-up wheelie shot from Ian Evans! The geezer at the back's a bit of a blouse though, he's got a helmet on!





ABOVE: Very cool hardtail XS11 trike – serious kit!

BELOW: Cool trike, stroppy teenager…



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MARS. IS IT A PLANET? IS IT A CHOCOLATE BAR? IS IT THE ROMAN GOD OF WAR? NOPE, IT'S THE MAG ANTI-THEFT REWARD SCHEME.

Returning to your bike and finding it's not where you left it is gut-wrenching and blood-boiling. MARS, or MAG Protected as it later became, started in 1993 when my mate Nigel Agar had his GS850 nicked from outside our house while we were both at a Showaddywaddy concert at the Rooftop Gardens nightclub in Wakefield.

It was the second bike he'd lost in less than a year – the previous one being his much-loved Triumph Bonneville which wore a fairly-rare TSS tank, the one with the yellow stripe. Needless to say, he was gutted and mad as hell. Bike theft was bad in the early Nineties – shortly beforehand somebody'd tried stealing my own GS850 from the back of my workplace in Leeds, and a few years before that I'd had a Honda FT500 stolen, again from a Leeds parking spot. Something had to be done.

Since 1989 I'd been running one-nighter biker parties at the Angel Inn in Allerton Bywater, near Castleford, just down the road from my old house. The first such event, the April Fools Party, so named because it ran on 1 April, 1989, I organised as a funding-feeder for the Biking Bonanza which Yorkshire MAG ran at Rufforth, near York, that subsequent August Bank Holiday. In 1990 I added Big Saturday, which ran on the last weekend of October, and acted as the after-meeting entertainment for the Yorkshire MAG AGM. The cash the parties generated funded the not inconsiderable expenses I incurred doing the MAG chairman's job so I didn't need to claim expenses from MAG Central funds. I never got less than 200 paying attendees so, when Nige's bike went AWOL, I had about £500 in the kitty from that year's events, and I made an immediate decision to put the lot up as a reward to find and convict the scumbag responsible. It was a typical MAG effort, going with what we had and pulling ourselves up by the bootstraps. We ran off a thousand leaflets describing the bike and advertising the reward, and then handed them out everywhere bikers congregated, and posted them up in pubs, clubs, and police stations, too.

Soon a call came in. It was being stored in a house in Seacroft, Leeds. I was down in Brum working the MAG stand at the NEC show, so Nige went a-hunting in the Ford Transit he used for his gardening business, with Big Steve in tow. Steve, as you might guess, was a big bloke (about six-four, and twenty-five stone), and's a nice bloke, but you wouldn't want to upset him. On the way, though, Nige spotted a local smackhead pushing the GS down York Road and, pulling a fast U-turn, they grabbed him and the bike, and invited him into the back of the van for a chat. He was just moving it, he pleaded, and without needing much prompting readily gave up the thief's name and address, which matched the info' given by the informant.

With the bike safely in the back of the van they resumed their journey to the suburban shithole where the target, an unsavoury and vaguely familiar-looking character in his late twenties, was holed up. Pretending they'd heard about the bike, and wanting to buy it to swap the parts around with the one they'd stolen, they asked him to take a look and see if it was the same model? Sure, he'd be glad to. Climbing in the back of the van to view it, he confirmed: "Yeah, it's just like the one I took. It came from Allerton Bywater." That's how dumb he was. With that, Nige revealed himself as the owner, and told him they'd be taking him to Killingbeck police station. Steve kept guard on him while Nige got back in the driver's seat, but they'd not gone far when the perp' announced he wasn't going anywhere, and certainly not Killingbeck, as he'd recently absconded from Wetherby prison. Picking up a spade, he went for Steve. Bad mistake. It all got a bit physical, and, in short order, what was left of him was tied up with a tow rope.

Arriving at Killingbeck police station, however, the cops went nuts, and started throwing around terms like kidnapping, wrongful imprisonment, and GBH… until, that was, the perp' punched the WPC who'd been untying him – Steve went into action again, while the fuzz looked the other way. That still wasn't the end of Nige's ordeal, though. The cops charged him with GBH so, tapping up a friendly local journalist, I explained the situation, and asked her nicely: "Please make him a hero!" She gladly obliged. Once she'd wired the story via the Associated Press and Reuters news agencies, Nige was in all the tabloids and, miraculously, the CPS lost all interest in his prosecution. It helped, of course, that the thief, who himself was originally from Allerton Bywater, was doing time for burglary, arson, firearms offences, kiddie-fiddling and, I kid you not, having sex with a horse. (Neigh, I hear you say, surely not?) Anyhow, his horseplay was over and another Judge stabled Mr Bestiality in Armley jail.

The reward having worked, I persuaded MAG's National Committee to take it nationwide and, thirty years on, we're still running it. If you're a MAG Member whose bike's stolen, you can advertise a reward of up to £500 for information leading to the conviction of those responsible, and for information that gets multiple convictions, and recovers a significant number of bikes, MAG will, at its sole discretion, pay up to £10,000. 34,000 motorcycles were stolen last year – while others wring their hands, and mouth platitudes, we, the Motorcycle Action Group, as usual, are the only ones doing anything about it. The stronger we are, the more we can achieve, it's that simple. So, when are you joining?

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MAG NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

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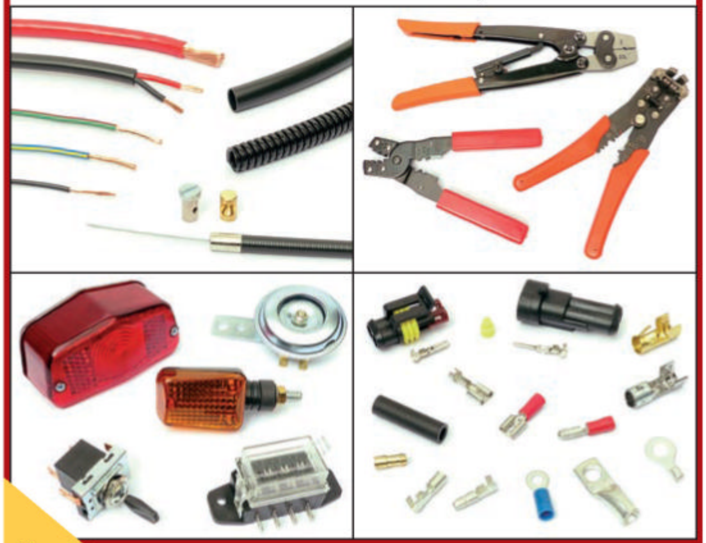

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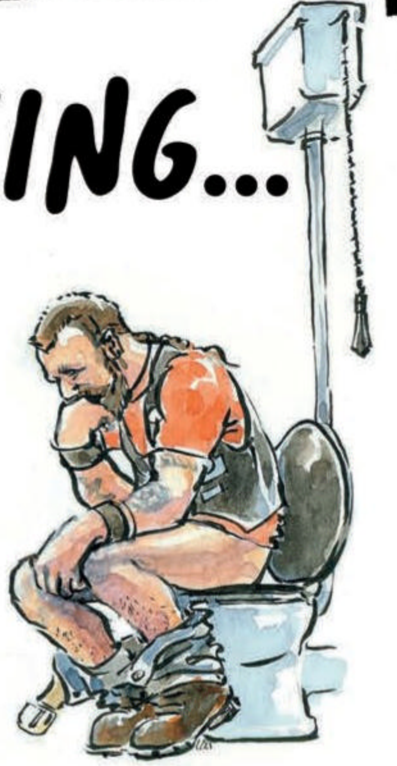

THE FOLLOWING STORY MAY BE A LITTLE MUCH FOR THE MORE SQUEAMISH OF OUR READERS, CONCERNING, AS IT DOES, REFERENCES TO DRINKING, DRUG TAKING, AND… UMM, BODILY WASTES. IF THIS, YOU FEEL, IS A LITTLE TOO MUCH FOR YOUR DELICATE CONSTITUTION, GENTLE READER, PLEASE TURN THE PAGE. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED...

Back in the 1980s, growing up in a small Suffolk town, there wasn't that much to do. Thankfully we did have an excellent biker pub (no names, no pack drill) and once, as a spotty yoof with a 'ped, I'd summoned the courage to go into it, it became my, and a fair few others I met while in there, hangout of choice. (As an aside, I really do feel for aspiring young bikers these days 'cos they don't really have such places in which to spend their important formative days… guess we were lucky to be born when we were really.)

Most Saturday nights a few of us set off on a pub crawl round the town, starting off in said biker pub, and going from there across the high street and up to the next pub. We'd usually skip the next one along as it was full of undesirables (ironic really, considering the state of us), and go on to the one after, and then the one after that, and then retrace our steps, but also take in the one in the middle of the shopping precinct, too, and it's in here that our story really starts.

There were usually about six or eight of us, sometimes more, sometimes less, and people'd come and go from the hardcore group as and when they felt like it. One night we'd made it to the precinct pub (no mean feat for some after a minimum of six pints) and were settling down to a, for most, seventh. Some time before, someone (yeah, okay, probably me…) had found, in a local shop, fast-acting, colourless, odourless, dissolvable laxative tablets, and others, after they'd been caught by them, had started to purchase them, too, and it became a battle of wits between us all to anonymously try and drop one in a friend's pint and, at the same time, try not to get one unknowingly dropped in yours. It must've looked odd, to onlookers, how the bunch of scruffy 'erberts in the corner always seemed to habitually sit with something (a hand, a beer mat, whatever) over their pints, but they didn't take that much notice of us 'cos we were young reprobates in ripped jeans and black leather jackets, and so beyond their interest anyway.

This particular night we'd got a couple of new faces along; one a younger, quieter lad with very long hair who'd never come out with us lot before 'cos he was generally in the darker bit of the pub where all the true-and-hairy greebos used to sit and smoke self-rolled, aromatic cigarettes. For some reason he'd decided to come with us that night though, and although he appeared slightly more worse for wear than we did, we didn't really think anything of it. The usual underhand laxative shenanigans'd begun, I'm guessing, an hour or so earlier and, as usual, no one knew how many, if any, had been surreptitiously placed. Anyway, maybe a quarter of the way through his pint, newbie stands up and, not saying much, heads off for the kharzis at the other end of the boozer. How long he was in there none of us, afterwards, was completely sure, but some time after we started to hear shouting, swearing, and girlish screams of revulsion, and people, normal people, started pushing past us in a mad scramble for the exit.

Intrigued, and slightly concerned, we turned around to see what the commotion was and were confronted by the hellish sight of the long-haired lad, trousers round his knees, ashen- (and another colour…) faced, with his hands, cheeks, and hair covered, absolutely covered in (there's no real way of saying this politely) sh*t. He looked terrified, and the sight, and stench, of him had a similar effect on us, too, and almost to a man we, too, got up and legged it as fast as our inebriated legs'd carry us.

……

A few weeks later, long-haired matey appeared in the biker pub. He didn't stay long, just long enough to make the transaction he'd come in for, but he did have a quick word with someone who later told us what he'd said.

"Oh man, that was horrible, really horrible… I'd not that long before dropped a tab and, as we sat down in the pub, I suddenly needed to go to the loo really badly. I got in there, just, and the bloody world fell out of me arse. It just kept coming and coming, and I suddenly got the idea I was crapping my guts out, and so started trying to push them back in with me hands, but they wouldn't stop, and I freaked out, running my hands over my head and face in panic, and then ran out of the toilet to try and get help… man, I am never, ever, doing acid again, ever!"

Us lot kind o' stopped messing about with laxatives after that…

NIK

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RICK HULSE

A SIMPLE TWIST OF FATE...

MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS JUST A SCRUFFY-ARSED LITTLE KID (ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE I DEVELOPED INTO THE FINE FIGURE OF A SCRUFFY-ARSED OLD MAN THAT I AM NOW), AT WEEKENDS I OFTEN USED TO WANDER DOWN TO THE SKYWAYS CAFÉ ON RINGWAY ROAD, NEAR MANCHESTER AIRPORT, ABOUT A MILE AWAY FROM WHERE I LIVE.

The reason for my frequent visits was the large number of bikers who used to congregate there, which meant there was a fabulous array of beautiful motorcycles for me to lust after! This was in the dim-and-distant late 1960s and early 1970s when bikers tended to congregate at cafés throughout the UK and, at that time, Greater Manchester probably had a dozen or more biker cafés, of which the Skyways Café (named due to its proximity to Ringway Airport, which later went on to become Manchester International Airport) was the best known and most popular in south Manchester. In those days, the vast majority of bikes to be seen there were British makes from Triumph to Norton, AJS to James, BSA to Royal Enfield, with an occasional Velocette Venom or Panther showing up. In short, motorcycles of outstanding beauty, or at least they were to my envious young eyes.

The guys who rode the bikes were commonly referred to as Greasers in those days, an epithet which didn't seem to bother them at all because every one of them knew every nut, bolt, cable and cog of their respective machines, and could fix just about any mechanical problem with just the tools they could carry in their jackets. Many were only known to each other by nicknames like Oily Bob, Big Frank, Fat Tony, BSA Tony, Scots Jimmy, Norton Jeff, and Decker. Many of them were at Skyways every weekend, others were regular visitors from other café groups like the 10-10 Café on Stockport Road in Levenshulme. Most were happy for my friends and I to have a good look at their bikes, though touching one without permission, quite rightly, earned a swift and well-deserved smack around the head. Some were even happy to explain things about their bikes to wide-eyed cheeky little gits like myself because they seemed to recognise a burgeoning love affair with motorcycles that would one day equal their own. It was those halcyon days, those beautiful motorcycles, those Greasers, and those wonderful conversations that set me firmly on track to becoming a life-long biker! Sadly, it closed down in the mid-1970s, and went on to become a very expensive restaurant, frequented by rich footballers and TV stars (such a shame), but I've often remembered those long sunny days, and the smell of Valvoline engine oil and sweaty leather with great fondness.

At 15 years old I got my first bike, a knackered 50cc Suzuki that was firmly jammed in third gear, which my friends and I'd run up to within inches of a heart attack bump-starting the bugger, then ride it around the fields behind my home. I never did fix that gearbox, but I did manage to replace the badly-blowing cylinder head gasket (albeit with a gasket cut from a Cornflakes box, then wrapped in Bacofoil), and clean a lot of shit out of the carb, thanks to those conversations at Skyways, before finally blowing the bleeder up when I tried to run it on half-a-gallon of industrial alcohol that came into my position by somewhat nefarious means.

Quite a few bikes and trikes've come and gone since then, and any of those guys I met at Skyways who've managed to survive the lottery of life'll now be in their late 70s or 80s. Of course, life moves along, and I've been blessed and cursed in equal measure with always being a very busy person, so it'd been many years since I'd thought about those days and the Greasers. Then, while my lovely wife Mandy and I were on holiday in Tenerife for our third wedding anniversary in February this year, we were sitting in the private hot-tub on the balcony of our hotel room, overlooking a beautifully peaceful azure sea, supping chilled wine, and reminiscing about our respective introductions into the world of biking, when we experienced what Bob Dylan would no doubt refer to as 'A Simple Twist of Fate'.

As we chatted it suddenly became evident that one of those influential early mentors of my own love affair with motorcycles, a chap known to all-and-sundry in those far-off days at the Skyways and 10-10 cafés as Norton Jeff, was later to become Mandy's much beloved step-father! I'd not seen or spoken to him since about 1974 when, if memory serves, the Skyways closed but, as it transpired, he met Mandy's mum in 1983 (herself a keen Velocette rider in the 1960s and '70s), and they went on to get married in 1988. What a small and wonderfully connected world we live in!

Sadly, he died on March 6, 2009 from cancer, six years before Mandy and I became an item, so I never got to thank him for inspiring my own life-long love affair with biking, and taking the time to patiently answer a lot of nosy questions from a scruffy-arsed Wythenshawe boy.

RIP Norton Jeff Brown, and thank you to all of the other guys who took the time to nurture the next generation of bikers at the Skyways Café on Ringway Road near Manchester Airport in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

RICK HULSE

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